MULTILINGUALISM IN THE CLASSROOM

Teaching and learning in a challenging context

Editor
Margaret Funke Omidire

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Foreword

Looking at the contents of this publication, one is struck by the fact that multilingual education is a complex multidisciplinary specialism that demands urgent attention — educators require ongoing training, guidance and support from the Department of Education, the district office and the school management team, in addition to intensive pre-service training. If educators facing a multilingual class are to achieve a level of synthesis in their lesson presentation and assessment that can contribute to meaningful learning experiences for every learner, they need to delve deeply into the resources of numerous disciplines operating at the interface of at least didactics, curriculum studies, educational psychology, social, cognitive and neuropsychology, psycholinguistics and anthropology.

The linguistic abilities and skills that facilitate our communication with others, and our interaction with the vast and diverse world around us, lie at the core of being human. These communicative abilities and skills enable us to express our needs and emotions, to process and define our observations, to develop our schemata, and to articulate our thoughts and reasoning. However, communication is a two-way engagement and language plays a dual function, having both an expressive and a receptive dimension. Our linguistic abilities and skills also enable us to gain some understanding of the needs, emotions, observations, schemata, thoughts and reasoning of others — not only those belonging to our own linguistic and cultural community with whom we share a mother tongue, but also communities of speakers of other languages with whom we become acquainted. In addition to the overt curricular aims of teaching and assessment, educators should, therefore, conceptualise and adhere to a hidden curriculum based on their deeper understanding of each learner. This will direct them in broadening, formulating and structuring their teaching objectives and selecting their teaching methods and content so that the outsider experiences of the speakers of other languages in the classroom may be substituted by encounters of a growing, deep participation and by a burgeoning sense of self. By doing this, they will simultaneously influence the able speakers of the language of learning to form and demonstrate an attitude of increasing acceptance and respect towards the mother-tongue speakers of other languages within the classroom and more broadly in other walks of life. Nowhere is this objective more vital than in educational settings such as South Africa, where most learners receive instruction through a second or additional language instead of their mother tongue.

We argue that multilingual education is key to the development of healthy relationship skills at all levels and should be utilised optimally to enable and enrich communication across contextual, linguistic and cultural barriers in later life. This publication should, therefore, be valued as a real investment in the future of Africa,

and especially South Africa, filling a vital niche. Hopefully, this will blaze the trail for more research and discussion on the critical and challenging issues pertaining to multilingual education.

We have to run with multilingual education, in its truths, its spirit and potential, in every module and every discipline taught, in every faculty and school of education and in every educational intervention to break new ground in order for the country to thrive socially, economically and politically. May this wheel turn within the next decade so that we have a cohort of learners, who are increasingly better equipped to communicate and relate in a multilingual society, leaving our schools to take their places in South Africa's diverse society.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASb	African Storybook
ASR	automated speech recognition
AVU	African Virtual University
AWE	automated writing evaluation
BICS	basic interpersonal communication skills
CALL	computer-assisted language learning
CALP	cognitive academic language proficiency
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CNE	Christian National Education
CR	Collaborative Reasoning
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DI	differentiated instruction
DRIFT	Discourse Reflection Inventory for Teachers
EFL	English First Language
EL	embedded language
ELLs	English language learners
ELT	English language teaching
EMI	English-medium instruction
ESL	English Second Language
FAL	First Additional Language
FLoI	familiar language of instruction
HL	home language
IAL	indigenous African language
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IIAL	Incremental Introduction of African Languages (policy)
ILA	International Literacy Association
IRE	initiate-response-evaluate mode
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoI	language of instruction
LoLT	language of learning and teaching
ML	matrix language
NEPA	National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OERs	open educational resources

PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (No. 3 of 2000)
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PD	professional development
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
QT	Quality Talk
Rm2R	Read-me-to-Resilience project
Saide	South African Institute of Distance Education
SASA	South African Schools Act
SCA	Supreme Court of Appeal
SD	standard deviation
SGB	school governing body
SLA	second language acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
TPACK	technological pedagogical content knowledge
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
wpm	words per minute

Map: The languages of Africa
Source: Eric Gaba in Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA.

SECTION I

Language teaching and learning challenges in multilingual contexts

Embracing multilingualism as a reality in classrooms: An introduction

Margaret Funke Omidire

The world is becoming increasingly multilingual and the need to embrace this reality is critical to the well-being of those who have to use multiple languages on a daily basis. Multilingualism is defined as the ability to use more than one language or competence in several languages. Multilinguals are people who are able to use more than two languages for communication (Clyne, 2017). Multilingual classrooms are no longer features of education in Africa alone, but have become commonplace in developed countries as well. Learners come to school, able to speak their home languages (HL) or L1 at different levels of proficiency and competence. This level of proficiency is what Cummins (1986; 2000) refers to as basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). The journey of getting an education begins, but not without its challenges in terms of access for those learners who have had no prior exposure to the language of instruction. For the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, this is usually English or French.

Learning in a language in which one lacks adequate academic proficiency has undesirable repercussions that have been well documented and, in the recent past, learners' home languages have been excluded as viable tools for early learning. This process has led to the classification of multilingualism as being either additive or subtractive. The South African Language in Education Policy (LiEP) promotes an additive approach to multilingualism. The policy states in part, 'the Department of Education recognises that our cultural diversity is a valuable national asset and hence is tasked, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism, the development of the official languages and respect for all languages used in the country'. According to the LiEP, additive multilingualism implies maintenance and strengthening of home languages while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional languages. This is in contrast to the subtractive approach to multilingualism where the second language is promoted over and above the home language.

In a country such as Nigeria, the language policy prescribes that the HL be used in the first three years of schooling, while English is taught as a subject and then, from Grade 4, there is a reversal and English becomes the language of instruction. There are, however, two realities emanating from this: first, there are multiple home languages in a classroom and, second, the rule applies only to government-owned public schools. The private schools (including low-fee schools) ignore this directive and implement English as the language of instruction from the first day of schooling.

Research has shown that the use of languages other than the HL for teaching and learning has many challenges and could lead to language becoming a barrier to learning (Heugh, 2009; Wolff, 2011; Njoroge et al, 2014). Learners are often labelled because of their lack of proficiency in the language of teaching and learning. The labelling is compounded by the learners' inability to bring their home languages into the classroom to facilitate learning. Many communities in sub-Saharan Africa are multilingual and learners are confronted with various languages in their communities and yet they cannot bring their prior experiences into the classroom because of language policies and practices that exclude them. Teachers are confronted with learners from various backgrounds, who speak different languages daily and there are often as many as three or four languages represented in the same classroom. Teachers struggle to support the learners effectively. Even where policy advocates additive multilingual education, there are no structures in place for effective implementation. And unfortunately, many individuals still believe multilingualism within the classroom context is a hindrance rather than an asset to teaching and learning. Challenges include three to four languages present in each classroom, teachers who are not proficient in some of these languages and the lack of resources that could facilitate learning. Although there is some shift in the acceptance of the link between multilingualism and culture, there is still a long way to go in terms of acceptance for pedagogy and scaffolding in the classroom.

Research conducted by Haukås (2016) reveals that although the metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities of multilinguals have been proved to be superior, this benefit is lost because children's home languages are not well developed and they are not encouraged within the school context to view multilingualism as a resource. The education system should recognise the linguistic diversity represented in multilingual classrooms for what they are — assets/resources — and not further challenges. In the specific contexts of sub-Saharan Africa, multiple languages need to be incorporated into the teaching and learning, not just for language education but across the curriculum (Chikiwa & Schäfer, 2016). Perhaps doing this will reduce the number of children who are labelled and sent to special education classes. García and Wei (2014) document the discontent with assessment practices involving multilingual learners, which are not equitable. Ignoring these facts could lead to the entrenchment of inequalities in the education system (Heugh et al, 2017). Translanguaging as an approach to learning in multilingual settings should be widely recommended and supported.

Translanguaging is the process whereby multilinguals intentionally and strategically use the languages in their repertoire in an integrated form for communication and learning (Song, 2016). It is accepted as a legitimate pedagogical approach involving the use of one language as a scaffold for language development and learning in another. As defined by García (2009; 2017), translanguaging is a unitary meaning-making system of the speakers in which multiple discursive practices are used to understand the bilingual world and to create a space where the students make use of all their linguistic and semiotic repertoire. It 'is the process by which bilingual students make use of the many resources their bilingual status offers' (Lasagabaster & García, 2014: 559). Translanguaging has also been described as 'a dynamic and transformative process of structuring and restructuring two languages across different modes in various contexts' (Song, 2016: 89).

As found in the studies discussed earlier, Lasagabaster and García (2014) observed that, regardless of educational guidelines establishing otherwise, the use of multiple languages in classrooms by learners and teachers is common practice. Therefore, the goal should be to promote pedagogical practices that consider this approach as a resource. Research supporting the use of translanguaging has been well documented (Baker, 2011) and several benefits of translanguaging have been identified. Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) argue that translanguaging could promote a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter, where scaffolding and mediated learning can take place in conjunction with more able peers, thus enabling the integration of fluent speakers with early learners and promoting collaboration. Further, they suggest that this could facilitate the development of the weaker learners, while also strengthening the home–school relationship.

The above foregrounds the need for open-mindedness on the part of teachers and researchers, and a recognition that, for accountability, a lot more research is required into the integration of learners' home languages into the learning process. It cannot be 'business as usual' as this amounts to continuously failing the majority of the learners who struggle with literacy. Language has been associated with culture, heritage, indigenous knowledge systems and, obviously, the prior knowledge and experiences that children bring into the classroom when they enter school. These are assets that could form the foundation for learning the new language (that is, the language of teaching and learning). Acknowledging and, indeed, valuing home languages has been linked to improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and enablement.

Embracing the home languages of learners through active multilingualism in the classroom is not a call to contest the importance of learning English or French and being functionally and academically literate in those languages within the scheme of global citizenship and economic empowerment; the issue is that we do not have to exclude the HL of the learners in the process.

We need to shift from what Liddicoat et al (2014) refer to as a 'monolingual mindset' and accommodate other languages before the education sector can

be socially responsive to the needs of the learners. For learning to take place, there needs to be interaction between learners in the classroom and this could be facilitated by promoting the use of home languages to engage and make connections that lead to high-level comprehension. This is in line with constructivist learning theory and adopts code-switching and code-mixing — but goes further to implement translanguaging within classrooms. These strategies have been proven to be effective in different circumstances (Heugh, 2002; 2009; 2015; Chikiwa & Schäfer, 2016). Teaching and learning pedagogies that ignore the complexities and dynamics of multilingual classrooms are simply reinforcing past worldviews, inequality and injustice in education. We cannot expect different learner-achievement results unless teaching and learning in multilingual settings are approached differently.

A fundamental approach for facilitating learning is to support teachers who are in multilingual classroom situations to rise above the complexity of the circumstances and to adopt strategies that enable learners to maximise the opportunities to learn. Hence, the need for a book that examines how teachers and learners can be supported in these challenging multilingual education settings.

* * *

This book is divided into three sections:
I.   Language teaching and learning challenges in multilingual contexts;
II. Proactive interventions and support for learning and learner development in multilingual settings;
III. Legislative and policy frameworks guiding multilingualism in education settings.

These three sections build on each other in the discussion of some of the challenges faced by learners and teachers, the various approaches that have been researched and the implications for current and future legislation on the subject.

Chapter 2, Effects of juxtapositioning input and output languages in multilingual classrooms, highlights the possible implications of fluency in a language of input on comprehension in a different language of output, with the focus on the ability to write a summary. The participants in this research were Grade 5 learners from Soweto, a multilingual township in South Africa. Non-equivalent quasi-experimental group design was used. The results show how one language of input enhances comprehension in a different language of output. The research makes an argument that there is a need to use the linguistic resources of multilingual learners and suitable approaches to help them make sense of their world and affirm their diverse identity positions.

Chapter 3, Enablers of teaching language for learning in multicultural classrooms, examines the notion that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to instruction is no longer appropriate for today's classrooms. Diverse cultural, linguistic and

educational backgrounds of learners, teachers, parents, and the community have made language teaching and learning a complex task. The situation is further compounded by social, economic and political factors. To understand this challenge calls for a systemic approach that looks at factors that influence learner engagement, teacher–learner interactions, peer-tutoring and a school culture that values change and embraces diversity.

Section II, Proactive interventions and support for learning and learner development in multilingual settings, comprises 6 chapters.

Chapter 4, titled Multilingualism as a resource for teaching and learning: Overcoming persistent challenges, outlines the affordances that multilingualism presents in the classroom and considers critical questions that have to be addressed for the adoption of multilingualism as a learning and teaching strategy.

Chapter 5, Supporting learners with dyslexia in multilingual classrooms through the use of mobile devices, highlights the role of technology in facilitating learning with specific groups in multilingual classrooms.

The overarching purpose of Chapter 6, Recontextualising discourse-intensive interventions for multilingual contexts: Implementing Quality Talk in China, is to substantiate small-group discussion as a promising pedagogical approach for enhancing teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms. This is accomplished by presenting a comprehensive review of relevant literature, as well as a case study documenting the recontextualisation and implementation of an evidence-based small-group discussion approach, Quality Talk (QT), in a challenging multilingual context. QT is a teacher-facilitated, small-group discussion approach designed to promote students' critical-analytic thinking and reasoning (that is, high-level comprehension) about, around and with text and content. The chapter presents an exemplar case for the recontextualisation of QT in an eighth-grade English language classroom in mainland China.

Chapter 7, Caring for young children's literacy development in a multilingual context through stories, implements a multiliteracy approach, using young children's favourite stories during their first year of formal schooling, to explore and understand their literacy experiences. The main aim was to improve language education within the school and home contexts. Ninety per cent of the young participants spoke English (the language of instruction) as a second or third language. The chapter presents teachers with innovative literacy strategies to support young children's language development in multilingual classroom settings.

Problematising monolingual practices in multilingual classrooms of Lusaka: Towards more inclusive teaching and learning, Chapter 8, is based on data collected through qualitative research design, involving interviews and classroom lesson observations. The concept of translanguaging as a pedagogic practice is shown as a resource in multilingual classrooms in Lusaka. The chapter reiterates the importance of translanguaging and the need to contextualise its application to yield the desired results.

Chapter 9, Disparities between reading fluency and comprehension: What do we miss?, reports on the findings of a pilot study on the evaluation of a library intervention programme for learners using English as a First Additional Language as their medium of instruction. The purpose of the project was to develop an impact assessment instrument for library usage programmes. The findings revealed the relationship between reading fluency and the learners' ability to demonstrate meaningful comprehension of the text read.

Chapter 10, Using technology as a resource for teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms, explores the technologies available to support teaching practices at various stages of the learning journey: reception and integration, access to the curriculum, and developing home language as well as additional language competencies. It explores the special case of open educational resources (OERs) and the potential of the combination of technology and OERs to open up opportunities to promote multilingual environments. The chapter then reviews a number of examples of this combination of enabling factors and the evidence that exists for their efficacy, including but not limited to Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA), TESSIndia and African Storybook. Finally, it outlines the implications for teacher development to make best use of technology in the multilingual classroom.

Section III, Legislative and policy frameworks guiding multilingualism in education settings, examines the need for policy evaulation in South Africa, Zambia and Namibia.

South Africa's language identity struggle in education: The historical factor, Chapter 11, reveals how the country's language history has impacted on the choice of the language of learning and teaching in a democratic South Africa, and addresses some of the issues regarding the language question. The functioning of knowledge production and the distribution of African languages should be recognised if their linguistic capital and, in turn, their market value are to be relevant and the negative perceptions of indigenous African languages are to be discarded. Rendering indigenous African languages equal to English, and not replacing it, would meet the needs of a culturally, economically, linguistically, socially and politically developed South Africa.

Chapter 12, The daunting challenge of multilingual education policy in Zambia: Teachers' perceptions, discusses grades 1–4 teachers' perceptions of the familiar language of instruction in Zambia and the implications of the familiar language of instruction policy on students' performance in multilingual classrooms and the existence of minority languages.

Chapter 13, The language in education conundrum from an empirical perspective: Using evidence to inform policy, outlines the Language in Education policy that currently guides language practice in the Foundation Phase in South Africa. It then looks at the implementation challenges and the arguments for and against the bilingual, mother-tongue approach in early education and the

straight-for-English strategy as practices in other multilingual contexts. The PIRLS 2016 results for Grade 4 reading literacy achievement in South Africa provide empirical evidence of a disaggregation of achievement between the home language and the language of learning. Selected background variables, including learners' exposure to the language of the test, control for observed differences. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of findings against a policy background that has not changed since 1997, and provides insights on driving the language policy debate forward.

Chapter 14, Is the matrix-embedded language the alternative medium of instruction for Namibia's multilingual schools?, reports on a study on the use of the mother tongue to facilitate learning and participation in English medium-of-instruction classrooms. The objective was to explore the best model to accelerate school achievement and set a high ceiling for learning. The study found that the teachers believed that the matrix-embedded model would help to improve learners' performance.

The final chapter, Improving the implementation of South African laws relating to multilingualism in education, reviews the relevant constitutional and statutory provisions, as well as the courts' decisions on language in education. The provisions are intended to redress the past injustices and imbalances in education, and to protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages. This review aims to facilitate a better appreciation of the challenges inherent in the implementation of the law, and to stimulate recommendations for an improved realisation of the objectives underlying the law.

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Effects of juxtapositioning input and output languages in multilingual classrooms

Malephole Philomena Sefotho

Introduction

Historically, languages were considered to be separate entities—each nation or society used its own language and hardly had contact with others. This has changed and today we live in an era of globalisation, where people of different cultures and nationalities infiltrate and influence one another's spaces and cultures. This has led to people acquiring one another's languages and forced people to embrace hybridity, multiplicity and fluidity of languages (Makalela, 2015a) and created multilingual nations. This multilingualism permeates society and even extends to the classroom context.

This chapter looks at the historical perspectives of education during the colonial period, which was inherited by many countries in the post-colonial period. It examines the challenges that have arisen from maintaining the colonial culture in multilingual classroom settings. This colonial inheritance has been identified as a barrier to multilinguals being able to value their identity and practise their cultural behaviours within and outside education sectors. This chapter discusses how schools have become multilingual spaces and some of the approaches that have developed in an attempt to challenge the monolingual approach that has been applied in schools over a long period in most post-colonial countries.

Language practices in the classroom

In the traditional classroom context, different languages were seen as being completely distinct entities that were taught and spoken at different times in different and separate spaces and contexts (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012a; Gort & Sembiante, 2015). This was done to avoid what was believed to be 'cross-contamination and confusion' as the concurrent use of languages was considered to be inappropriate (Baker, 2001). Knowledge of more than one language was

viewed through a monolingual lens and it was argued that the use of more than one language would cause 'mental confusion and language handicaps' (Baker, 2001). It was further believed that mutilingualism contributed to poor academic performance of learners (Cummins, 1979) yet there was no research at the time to prove this. Thus learners were forced to suppress their knowledge of other languages and deal with one language at a time (Cummins, 1979). This fear of language confusion promoted the separation of the languages and maintained the idea of monolingualism in bi/multilingual settings.

However, later research has shown that, on the contrary, multilingualism is an advantage to learners as it influences their cognitive and linguistic development and contributes to the learning process (Makalela, 2014). The use of one language at a time was standard during the colonial period but it continued even during the post-colonial era because nations wanted to 'maintain their standards' (Cummins, 1979). Colonial languages were regarded as prestigious and as more advantageous than other languages, which created a monolingual bias and learners were forced to use only one language at a time and suppress their other languages. Rather than seeing language as an advantageous resource for making meaning, it was considered to be an isolated entity.

Although researchers have recently focused on trying to understand how to break the boundaries between languages, education practices in bi/multilingual classrooms still have a 'monolingual bias'. For example, in post-colonial countries such as South Africa, the theory of 'one language at a time' still dominates in schools, yet most schools are multilingual (Makalela, 2015c; Hurst & Mona, 2017). Multilingual learners are treated as monolinguals. Research shows that the separation of languages in bi/multilingual settings promotes monolingualism whereas there are no divisions between the languages in a multilingual person — they all overlap (García, 2009a; Makalela, 2015a). García refers to this separation of languages as 'monolingualism times two' (2009a: 71). Researchers argue that the knowledge of more than one language has cognitive and economic benefits (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015) and allows learners to be who they are within the social and educational context. Being able to value their identity boosts their confidence and, therefore, improves their academic performance. They further argue that allowing learners to use their linguistic repertoires improves their working memory, provides awareness of language structures and forms, and reduces the drop-out rate in schools.

Research not only supports bi/multilingual classrooms, where learners are allowed to draw from all the dimensions in their lives (Reyes & Hornberger, 2016), but also challenges the monolingual bias and emphasises the concurrent use of languages (García & Lin, 2016) which allows bi/multilinguals to make meaning of their world. It has been proven that all languages in a bi/multilingual learner are autonomously active all the time — even when one language is not being used — but that using two or more languages cannot cause confusion in the user

(Makalela, 2016). In fact, nowadays sociolinguists reject the idea of the separation of languages and relegate it to a politically constructed ideology, which is highly questionable (Jørgensen et al, 2011; Ag & Jørgensen, 2013).

Because of a colonial legacy, many post-colonial countries focus on the use of English as the medium of instruction because of its global status (Hurst & Mona, 2017) and English tends to dominate over the home languages of learners from an early stage in their education (Gort & Sembiante, 2015). This further creates separation and hierarchy between the languages, where one is considered to be more powerful than the others.

Education in South African schools

South Africa, like the rest of the world, experiences multilingualism in its classrooms and this has become a great challenge in the education system. Learners come from elsewhere in South Africa and other countries with their different languages, behaviours and cultures. This meshing of languages in a multicultural classroom presents a challenge as to how best to incorporate the knowledge of various languages into the teaching and learning environment. Researchers argue that the only way to enhance learning in multilingual classrooms is to value and make use of the linguistic resources that learners bring to school (Makalela, 2015a; McKinney, 2017). Against this background, the South African Constitution declared 11 official languages and clearly states that leaners should be taught in an official language of their choice. In South African schools, however, the predominant languages are English and Afrikaans. The system seems to ignore the fact that learners come to the classrooms with their different linguistic and social behaviours. Nonetheless, South Africa could capitalise on these differences for epistemic access (Makalela, 2015b; McKinney, 2017) and avoid the high drop-out rates at schools.

Despite the language policy, a Western monoglossic language ideology prevails in South African schools (McKinney, 2017) that does not value diversity and multilingualism, which have become the norm all over the world (Kiramba, 2016). The education system is still putting languages into linguistic boxes (Makalela, 2015a) instead of embracing multingualism in the true sense of valuing all languages equally and using them as resources to enhance teaching and learning (McKinney, 2017). These researchers point out that the use of several languages in a classroom should not be a problem because multilingual learners already communicate effectively in diverse languages outside the classroom (Makalela, 2016). He gives an example of Soweto, where learners acquire various languages, even before the age of six years, and are able to communicate effectively with one another using these different languages. Brock-Utne (2016) relates similar situations in Tanzania, where children communicate effectively outside the classroom using three or more African languages.

This diversity makes South African classrooms multilingual and this should determine the type of teaching and learning environment that should reign there (Heugh, 2015). Makalela (2015a) views multilingualism as a resource because educators and learners can use the diverse linguistic and cultural behaviour they bring into the learning environment, to enhance the learning process and assist one another. Research has shown that avoiding the diverse knowledge that bi/multilinguals have does not help them but makes them become what they are not.

Making use of learners' diverse linguistic resources

Over the past two decades, researchers have re-examined the assumptions underlying monolingual education and the separation of languages, and have advocated a more dynamic and flexible approach to language use (García, 2009a; Baker, 2011). Recently there has been a move to use different languages in the same lesson, at the same time, to enhance and improve all the languages (García, 2009b; Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Researchers have extended the idea of looking at language resources as a social concept that depicts what multilingual learners are. This consideration led to several models that criticise the 'monolingual bias' and embrace or encourage the use of all linguistic resources that learners bring to a multilingual classroom.

One of the first models was the Continua of Biliteracy model (Hornberger, 2003), which brings together the theoretical field of bilingualism and literacy and introduces the concept of biliteracy, which considers all communicative repertoires and practices in two (or more) languages in or around writing. It suggests that the multilingual resources that learners bring to the classroom should be used for learners' language and literacy development (Hornberger & Link, 2012). The idea is to pay greater attention to oral and bilingual interaction in the classroom so learners believe they have the right to communicate in their own language and not only in a language owned by others. In this way there is a positive transfer across languages and literacies. The Continua model allows 'flexible approaches to language learning in bi and multilingual contexts' (Carstens, 2016: 10).

Further to the Continua of Biliteracy model, linguists developed another approach termed translanguaging, which promotes the equality of all the languages in bi/multilingual situations and encourages the concurrent use of such languages to enhance learning (Baker, 2001; Williams, 2002; García, 2009a). Here language is not considered to be an isolated entity but a process that incorporates all the linguistic resources of learners to make meaning and enhance their learning. This approach does not only support bi/multilingual classrooms, where learners are allowed to draw from all the dimensions of their lives to develop their reading biliteracy (Reyes & Hornberger, 2016), but also challenges the monolingual bias. It emphasises the concurrent use of languages in bi/multilingual spaces (García & Lin, 2016) to enable learners to make sense of their world. Translanguaging 'creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different

dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, beliefs and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated meaningful performance and makes it into a lived experience' (Wei, 2011: 1223).

The term 'translanguaging' was invented by Cen Williams to refer to the systematic use of two languages in teaching and learning inside the same lesson (Williams, 1996; Baker, 2011) and it originates from the Welsh word *trawsieithu*. Originally, it referred to the situation where learners would alternate from one language to another to develop their reading and writing skills. Baker (2001) writes that in Wales, students were asked to read a text in English and write it in Welsh and vice-versa — a deliberate switching between the language of input and the language of output in classrooms. Translanguaging is a process of receiving information in one language, processing it and producing the information in another language (Lewis et al, 2012a; García & Lin, 2016). The idea 'entails using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and in order to argument the pupil's ability in [all] languages' (Williams, 2002: 40). In this way, the development of all languages is balanced because the weaker language is normally strengthened by the one that the learner understands better (Lewis et al, 2012b). This means there is no hierarchy in languages but that one language is used to develop the other languages. The notion of translanguaging 'promotes a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter … in a bilingual situation. To read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another, means that the subject matter has to be properly "digested" and reconstructed' (Baker, 2001: 104–105). Translanguaging is based on various ways of using all linguistic resources in a bi/multilingual classroom context (García & Wei, 2014).

Juxtapositioning languages in a multilingual classroom

There is little research on how juxtapositioning the language of input and the language of output can benefit reading comprehension in bi/multilingual learners. My research investigates the possible influences of a language of input on the comprehension and fluency in a different language of output. I focused on the students' ability to write a summary in a language other than the language of input to show comprehension and how the knowledge of one language can enhance another weaker language. This is anchored in the positivist paradigm, which is normally aligned with quantitative research (Sefotho & Du Plessis, 2018), as it employs an application of tests to measure learners' fluency and ability to use both their home language and an additional language in summary writing, where the language of input differs from the language of output. The relevance of the positivist paradigm to my study was that it helped me to evaluate the mean performance scores of the learners' ability to use the knowledge of one language to develop another language. The participants were Grade 5 multilingual learners from two schools in Soweto, a very diverse and multilingual location in Gauteng Province in South Africa. In this area, learners and adults are naturally engaged

in a range of African languages. They are able to use several languages in flexible and unbounded scenarios, depending on the context and situation. They do not have a fixed language and are able to go beyond the language boundaries they encounter. Although learners who participated in this study were fluent in more than two languages, for the purpose of my research only two languages were used, that is, the language that was considered to be their home language and the one that was an additional language at the schools. Grade 5 learners were chosen as appropriate participants for this study because their home language had been used as a medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase and they were in their second year of using English at the Intermediate Phase. It was assumed that these learners had adequate vocabulary and understanding in both languages. The participating learners, therefore, were regarded as bilinguals who used Sesotho as their home language and English as an additional language and as the medium of instruction. Sesotho is a dominantly used African language in Soweto. A battery of tests in both English and Sesotho was used to test the proficiency of the learners in the two schools.

The schools were selected from the pool of primary schools that use Sesotho as the home language (HL) and English as the First Additional Language (FAL). The schools were also from the same circuit and the same cluster in order to have a homogeneous and comparable group of learners. The socio-economic background of the learners was also considered. Although the two schools had a similar socio-economic status and environment, the reading fluency test that was administered revealed that the learners in the one school were more fluent in English than the other. On the other hand, the learners from the second school seemed more fluent in their home language, Sesotho, than the former. As a result of this performance, the study intended to find out if juxtapositioning the languages could benefit learners. Table 2.1 shows the results of the reading fluency tests in both English and Sesotho in the two schools.

Table 2.1: Performance of schools A and B on reading fluency

Text language	School	N	Mean	Std deviation	Sig	Sig (2-tailed)
English text	School A	59	156	37.98749	0.026	0.051
	School B	36	137	49.88465		
Sesotho text	School A	59	116	38.68305	0.008	0.247
	School B	36	130	65.10560		
English text ($t = -1.995$; $df = 59.6$; $p > 0.05$) Sesotho text ($t = -0.106$; $df = 93$; $p > 0.05$)						

Source: Author's results from fluency tests

Table 2.1 shows that the mean for English words per minute (wpm) reading fluency in school A was 156 with a standard deviation (SD) of 38. The mean for school B (M = 137 wpm) is lower than that of school A with a higher standard deviation (SD = 50). The results of the *t*-test, comparing the strength of the mean gain, show that the differences between the performances of the two groups in English reading fluency trials are not statistically significant at an alpha value of 0.05 (*t* = −1.995; *df* = 60; *p* > 0.05).

The second part of the table shows the mean scores for reading fluency wpm in Sesotho for the two schools. The mean for school A was lower (M = 116), with a lower standard deviation (SD = 38). The mean for school B was 130 wpm with a higher standard deviation (SD = 65). However, the *t*-test results show that the differences between the two schools in Sesotho reading fluency are not statistically significant at an alpha value of 0.05 (*t* = −0.106; *df* = 93; *p* > 0.05). When comparing English and Sesotho between the two groups, the results showed that school A had a higher mean score than school B in the English text, which implies that learners in school A are more fluent in English than in their home language. On the other hand, learners in school B had a higher mean score in the home language text than in the English text. The general interpretation from these results was that learners in school A were more fluent in English than those in school B, whereas school B was more fluent in the home language than school A.

Learners were given another test in which they had to read a passage in one language and write a summary of it in a different language. This test was administered to assess whether knowledge of more than one language can serve as a resource to develop all the languages in bi/multilingual classroom settings. Table 2.2 shows the performance of the learners on writing a summary where the language of input differs from the language of output.

Table 2.2: Performance of schools A and B on summary writing in a different language

Text language	School	N	Mean scores in a different language	Std deviation	Sig	Sig (2-tailed)
English text	School A	59	1.7966 [90%]	0.51794	0.000	0.004
	School B	36	1.3333 [67%]	0.82808		
Sesotho text	School A	59	1.2203 [61%]	0.87233	0.046	0.242
	School B	36	1.4167 [71%]	0.73193		
English (*t* = −3.016; *df* = 52; *p* < 0.05) Sesotho (*t* = 1.178; *df* = 84; *p* > 0.05)						

Source: Author's test results

Table 2.2 shows that the mean for English in school A was 1.8 (90 per cent) with a relatively low standard deviation (SD = 0.5), whereas the mean for school B was higher (M = 1.3/67 per cent) with a higher standard deviation (SD = 0.8) than that of school A. Learners in school A, who appeared to be more fluent in English, performed better in writing a coherent summary in Sesotho than did the learners in school B, who were more proficient in Sesotho in the first test. School A had a mean score of 90 per cent and school B had a mean score of 67 per cent. The results of the *t*-test, comparing the difference, show that the difference between the two groups in writing a summary in Sesotho from an English text is statistically significant at an alpha value of 0.05 ($t = -3.016$; $df = 52$; $p < 0.05$). This shows that learners in school A had a higher level of comprehension in English and, therefore, seemed to be able to interpret what they had read in English and present it in another language. A lack of an adequate understanding of English in school B learners became a barrier to performing well when writing a summary in Sesotho of an English text. It should be noted that the mean for school B exceeded the international minimum value of 75 per cent, whereas for school A, the mean was below the international benchmark.

On the other hand, learners in school B outperformed those in school A when writing an English summary of a text they had read in Sesotho. In this test, school B had a mean score of 71 per cent versus that of school A, which scored 61 per cent. However, the *t*-test results reveal that the difference between the performance of the two groups in writing a summary in English from a Sesotho text is statistically not significant at an alpha value of 0.05 ($t = 1.178$; $df = 84$; $p > 0.05$). This implies that although the mean scores in writing a summary in English differ, that difference does not necessarily mean school B is better than school A, but there is an improvement in their performance when looking back at their English fluency level. It also shows that learners in school B have a significant understanding of their home language, which enabled them to write a summary in English from a Sesotho text. However, we cannot deny that both groups performed below the international minimum value of 75 per cent, though the mean for school B is closer to that value.

Generally, the results show that if a learner is fluent in one language, they will easily be able to interact and understand a text in that language and be able to interpret the information in another language. This affirms that reading and understanding of text is socially rooted and involves interaction between the reader and the text, regardless of the language (Makalela, 2014). The understanding and knowledge in the language of input enables one to give a comprehensive output in another language.

In school A, the learners' level of comprehension of English was an advantage that assisted them in writing a good comprehensive summary in Sesotho. On the other hand, learners in school B outperformed those in school A when writing a summary in English—their high levels of comprehension of their home language,

Sesotho, became an advantage when writing a comprehensive English summary. This shows that the knowledge of one language can develop another weaker language. This confirms that juxtapositioning languages can be used to enhance reading comprehension in multilingual settings. The knowledge and understanding of one language can be used as a resource to develop an additional language. Therefore, there is a need to find appropriate approaches that can be used in multilingual classrooms rather than trying to convert multilingual learners to monolinguals.

In an African context, multilingualism does not constitute a problem to multilingual learners — it is already a cultural reality (Makalela, 2015c). The African culture embraces the importance of other languages and their influences on one another. Because of this understanding, researchers continue to question the linguistic boundaries that were created during the colonial era. Multilingual learners, such as those in Soweto, use languages in a fluid manner and do not separate them. In a multilingual context, one language does not exist in isolation from others and one language is not adequate for meaning making. Trying to separate the languages denies learners their cultural identity. In multilingual settings, all languages are needed to construct a complete meaning (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). This shows that learners from a southern African cultural background do not get confused by using multiple languages in the classroom — instead they benefit because this reflects their cultural reality.

Perhaps the most challenging issue facing the education system in South Africa today is the residue of the colonial era. There is a need to rethink the 'prestige' structure and beliefs of the past (Hurst & Mona, 2017) and find appropriate methodologies for the post-colonial period (Cekiso, 2012), which embrace our social and cultural practices. In places like Soweto, it appears that one language is incomplete without the other and that there is free movement between the spoken languages (Makalela, 2016). Languages become a representation of people's cultures and, therefore, should be valued. Translanguaging is an approach that can make use of all the linguistic resources that learners bring into multilingual classrooms (García & Wei, 2015). This belief is intertwined within the African *ubuntu* culture, which stipulates '*motho ke motho ka batho*' ['I am because you are; you are because I am'], which means that one person is incomplete without the other (Sefotho & Makalela, 2017). It is through this connection that Makalela came up with the concept of an Ubuntu Translanguaging framework (2016). In South African schools, it seems that no language is fully independent and the boundaries between languages seem not fixed but fluid.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from this study that multilingualism in South African classrooms is not a challenge but has been made into a challenge because we have not embraced and made use of all the linguistic resources that learners bring to the classroom. A learner's knowledge or proficiency in one language becomes

a resource in developing the knowledge of other languages. The findings from writing a summary, where the language of input differs from language of output, revealed that understanding of one language improved performance in the other language. For example, learners whose reading fluency was low in Sesotho improved and performed better when writing a summary in Sesotho from an English text, whereas those with a low reading fluency level in English, performed better when writing a summary in English from a Sesotho text. Proficiency in one language assisted learners to perform better in another language.

If the linguistic resources of multilingual learners are used constructively, they can serve as the basis for improving academic performance. We need to take a holistic approach and accept and value the complexity of the social lives of bi/multilingual speakers (García, 2009b). It can be seen from the results that the deliberate switching between the language of input and the language of output in classrooms helps learners to perform better in the weaker language. Thus, translanguaging — the process of receiving information in one language, processing it and producing the information in another language (García & Lin, 2016) — seems to be the way forward in multilingual education sectors. It can further be concluded that 'translanguaging pedagogies go along with the way multilingual speakers use their own resources in communication rather than swimming against the tide by separating languages' (Leonet, Cenoz & Gorter, 2017: 224). The results further affirm the idea that the weaker language is normally strengthened by the one that the learner understands better (Lewis et al, 2012). This leads to a balanced understanding of the languages, eliminating the hierarchy and separation in languages and, instead, using languages as resources that strengthen each other.

This research concludes that there is a need to utilise the linguistic resources of multilingual learners and develop approaches to help them make sense of their world and affirm their diverse identities. This will have positive impact on their success and will also promote a flexible use of languages. Research has proved that affirmation of one's identity boosts participation in class (Madiba, 2014), gives learners an opportunity to make use of their knowledge of multiple languages and, therefore, changes their attitude towards the learning and knowledge of other languages (García & Wei, 2014). For all of these reasons, we need a new approach to learning and teaching that uses multilingualism as a resource in the classroom, which affirms learners' identities and self-esteem, thus enabling them to improve their academic performance.

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Enablers of teaching language for learning in multilingual classrooms

Marisa Leask

Introduction

Globalisation, political unrest and economic pressures have increased mobility of populations across countries and continents escalating the prevalence of multilingual classrooms in schools. Immigration statistics on average from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in 2015 showed that 12.5 per cent of students aged 15 years and older had an immigrant background. In developing economies, as in Africa, linguistic and cultural diversity with inherited languages from their colonial past are evident in the schooling system (UNESCO, 2017). The challenge that faces teachers is providing students with quality education in multilingual classes where often students do not have a strong literacy foundation in either their home language or the language of instruction at school.

This chapter addresses transformation in education from a systems approach (Nilsen, 2015) by identifying enablers within the school to address the challenges of language, teaching and learning in a multilingual context. The enablers of teaching language for learning in multilingual classrooms will be discussed in terms of the student, instructional practices, assessment, differentiated instruction, support systems and teacher education.

Students

For learning to occur, students need to be prepared, present and motivated (World Bank, 2018). In this section, I discuss early learning programmes and student engagement. Early learning programmes help to integrate students into schools and when combined with nutrition and care significantly improve children's ability to learn (World Bank, 2018). The discussion on student engagement will look at quality teacher–student interactions to keep the student present and motivated.

Early learning programmes

Early learning programmes help to prepare children for school. Research findings confirm that children who do not know the language of teaching and learning, but who attend high-quality preschool programmes, experience long-term benefits with regard to achievement (EU, 2015), and are less likely to repeat grades or drop out of school (World Bank, 2018). Early education programmes should foster crucial pre-academic abilities through play (Bloch, 2009; World Bank, 2018) using activities such as games and songs that will encourage them to participate and not feel self-conscious (Bernhardt, 2010). Absorbing young immigrants into the schooling system has shown to be an effective way of integrating students linguistically and culturally into their new communities (OECD, 2015). In developing economies, early learning programmes show substantial benefits in supporting children's academic achievements (UNESCO, 2017).

Increasing attendance of early learning programmes requires a two-pronged approach. Firstly, governments need to provide children with access to early educational programmes as often attendance is linked to the socio-economic status of families (OECD, 2015). Secondly, immigrant parents or parents from low socio-economic groups often have little or no experience with early educational programmes and need to be made aware of their benefits (OECD, 2015).

Teacher–student interactions

Teacher–student interactions play an important role in student engagement, influencing language learning (Ferreira, Jordaan & Pillay, 2009). The quality of the interaction is determined by the emotional support, classroom organisation and instructional support (Abry et al, 2013). Research on second language instruction in Australia confirmed that students will engage more in literacy tasks where there is mutual respect between the teacher and student in terms of good rapport, teacher credibility and citizenship (Louden, Rohl & Hopkins, 2008). Similarly, research on immigrant performance on literacy and mathematics has shown that where students have a strong sense of belonging, they succeed at school (OECD, 2015). Therefore, teachers need to provide an environment in which the student feels safe enough to make mistakes and engage with other students (Nel, 2011).

Classroom organisation is characterised by an orderly environment where there are clear expectations (Martin & Rimm-Kaufman, 2015). Students tend to be more motivated to take part in literacy tasks when there is a clear sense of purpose. The purpose of the lesson must be clearly stated to help the teacher stay focused and for students to determine what is important (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). I also believe that a clear purpose is critical to building schema and contextualising information and guides the students' listening, speaking, reading and writing. Well-organised classrooms are associated with self-regulatory skills, engagement, motivation, and literacy and language skills (Abry et al, 2013).

Instructional support occurs when students are given clear feedback, creating opportunities for critical thinking and modelling new vocabulary (Martin & Rimm-Kaufman, 2015). The manner in which the teacher corrects and provides feedback to the student is important in language learning to encourage the student to speak and write in the classroom (Bernhardt, 2010). Immediate feedback enables the teacher to coach and support the student to produce high-quality work (Tomlinson & Edison, 2003). Rock et al (2008) add that errors should be addressed in a neutral way through explicit feedback and modelling correct syntax. It is important that the teacher balance correction and affirmation to facilitate learning, to honour the students and develop their self-esteem (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). In the next section classroom instruction will be addressed as it relates specifically to developing the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in students.

Instructional practice

Academic achievement for students whose home language is different from the language of learning would benefit from an integrated curriculum which includes both content knowledge and language knowledge during language instruction (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). The role of the home language will also be included in this section as it can enable language learning.

Student engagement

The content of language instruction is determined by the curriculum and the purpose language serves (Hipsky, 2011). Where language serves an academic purpose, instruction should focus on developing both the comprehension and linguistic competence of students (Grabe, 2009). In this way, content knowledge, also known as subject knowledge, enables the student to infer meaning from various sources across the curriculum (Hernandez, 2003) and to communicate effectively through writing and speaking (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Instruction therefore has to be meaningful for the student and the teacher must provide numerous opportunities to practise reading, listening, writing and speaking (Lerner & Johns, 2009). Through reading and listening activities, the student hears the language in context, gaining an understanding of language form (Bernhardt, 2010) and being exposed to grammar and vocabulary (Judd, Tan & Walberg, 2001). By practising their writing, students are provided with an opportunity to consolidate their learning, leading to independence (Bernhardt, 2010). Writing develops spelling, handwriting, metalinguistic and punctuation skills (Nel & Nel, 2012). Rothenberg and Fisher (2007) recommend that teachers provide the students with specific strategies to teach them academic writing rather than just giving them writing work to do. Attention should be given to linguistic form by providing explicit instruction in the context of purposeful learning across subjects (Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008).

Explicit instruction

Research findings confirm that explicit instruction of language knowledge combined with learning and comprehension strategies are beneficial to students without knowledge of the language of learning (August et al, 2010). Explicit instruction is important, particularly where students are not exposed to the language of learning (Rock et al, 2008; Nel, 2011). The starting point of explicit language instruction is the purpose of the lesson. If students do not understand the purpose of activities, the lesson has a limited effect on developing language (Louden et al, 2008). Explicit instruction should also address alphabetic knowledge, word knowledge, grammar and vocabulary (Bedore, Pena & Boerger, 2010; Nel, 2011).

Alphabetic knowledge underpins the written form of the language (Konza, 2006). There is a strong relationship between phonological awareness and language proficiency in both home language and language of learning (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Research data also confirm that if an understanding of the alphabetic principle is firmly established, then these skills can be transferred to the language of learning (Heugh, 2000).

Deep orthographic languages like English require language-specific instruction to develop metalinguistic awareness (Koda, 2007). In such cases, word-recognition skills need to be developed (Newman, 2010). The teacher needs to clarify and identify difficult words and then consolidate this knowledge through discussions to develop reading skills (August et al, 2010). Activities in the classroom should also include teaching the student high-frequency words and phrases in the language of learning to support reading accuracy and fluency (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Word recognition automaticity is an enabling skill that distinguishes proficiency levels of advanced second-language readers (Grabe, 2009).

Grammar instruction is particularly important at low and intermediate reading levels as is text-structure awareness with organisational cues (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Learning grammar enables the student to write clear, well-structured sentences (Brisk, 2010). Increasing vocabulary knowledge supports academic language skills (Bedore et al, 2010). Through building vocabulary, the student is better able to access curriculum content (Nel & Nel, 2012), which will assist content learning. Vocabulary also improves fluency, a determinant of reading comprehension (August et al, 2010; Nel & Nel, 2012). Teaching vocabulary requires more than teaching words; it requires teaching word depth and breadth (Kohnert & Pham, 2010). Repeated exposure to words in multiple contexts shows the variations in meaning (Brisk, 2010) and helps to build vocabulary.

Role of home language

The student's knowledge of home language can assist in learning the language of learning by comparing and contrasting similarities and differences between the

two languages (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). The use of home language can also fulfil a functional role in providing explanations to compare the student's existing knowledge with the language of learning (Hall, 2011). However, a challenge in multilingual classes is that some students enter the school system without having mastered their home language. These students are likely to experience difficulties with language across the curriculum, reinforcing the need for development of learning both the home language and the language of learning in the classroom (August et al, 2010).

The case for developing home language is that it is seen as a resource for learning a second language (Hall, 2011). There is a strong relationship between phonological awareness and language proficiency in both home language and the language of learning (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Research data confirm that if an understanding of the alphabetic principle is firmly established in one language, these skills can be transferred to a second language (Heugh, 2000). The student's knowledge of home language can assist in learning the language of teaching by comparing and contrasting similarities and differences between the two languages (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). Target vocabulary should be presented in the context of meaningful text in both languages to build on the student's knowledge of the home language (Bedore et al, 2010). Teachers can also expose students to cognates as a means of building vocabulary, which is connecting the home language and the language of learning words that have similar meanings and are phonetically the same (Grabe, 2009).

Assessment

Assessment has been described as one of the most effective practices of instruction (Blair, Rupley & Nicholas, 2007), providing the teacher with knowledge of the student and how the student responds to instructions (O'Meara, 2011). Continual and varied assessment performs a crucial role in supporting and challenging all students to meet the learning objectives of the curriculum (O'Meara, 2011). Assessment is important to support and enhance learning, as well as a reflective process for the teacher to adapt instruction to meet the needs of the student (Lerner & Johns, 2009; Nel, 2011). Assessments serve four main goals. The first type, formative assessment, focuses on the learning process; the second, progressive assessment, centres on the student product; the third addresses mastery; while the fourth type serves as an instructional tool.

Formative assessment

Formative assessments provide the teacher with knowledge of the students' academic progress to guide their instruction (Rock et al, 2008). For students to achieve academic competency, assessment needs to include process, allowing for a more interactive, non-static assessment approach to meet the needs of the student and inform instruction (Omidire, 2009). These assessments should be done

frequently to inform the teacher about the need for instructional changes regarding pace, grouping practices, reteaching of particular concepts or if instruction can move to the next learning area (O'Meara, 2011). Through the administration of different types of assessment, the teacher is able to determine each student's current level of skill or knowledge, and where learning gaps exist (Walton, 2011).

Progressive assessment

Progressive assessments are continual assessments that allow students to present their knowledge in various ways for the teacher to assess their learning in relation to the desired outcome or objective (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007; O'Meara, 2011). Assessment starts with measuring the initial performance of the student and how performance changes in relation to the goal desired (Bernhardt, 2010). These assessments afford students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know through their products over time (Santamaria, 2009) and should be included throughout the year (Nel & Nel, 2012) and across the different forms of language (Nel, 2011).

Summative assessment

Unlike the previous assessment types, which focus on the student, summative assessments confirm that the curriculum goals have been met (O'Meara, 2011). Summative assessments occur at the end of a learning period to evaluate the students' knowledge against a predetermined standard (Murray & Christison, 2010). The assessment process provides a comparison of student outcomes, which can be compared within or outside the school on specific content areas that may need more focus in the following year (O'Meara, 2011).

Assessment as an instructional tool

Assessment used as an instructional tool can support the learning process by providing the student with feedback, alerting the student to ways of improving learning (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Feedback from the teacher provides the student with information on how the teacher evaluates performance, keeping the student actively engaged. The students' product provides the teacher with information on how to adapt instruction to respond with specific literacy instruction and to create further opportunities to practise (Bernhardt, 2010). By using a variety of assessment methods, student outcomes should provide teachers with correct diagnostic tools. Furthermore, assessments should be able to differentiate between limited language skills and learning disabilities (EU, 2015).

Differentiation

Classroom instruction should be based on a differentiated instruction (DI) approach. Although initially DI was seen to help 'special needs' students, it has evolved to serve students across the intellectual spectrum and, more recently, 'all

students from culturally, linguistically, and academically diverse backgrounds within the current context of the general education classroom' (Santamaria, 2009: 216).

Differentiated instruction is a responsive instructional approach in which the teacher differentiates language instruction in four areas: content, learning process, product and learning environment, according to each student's readiness, interests and learning profile (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000; Santamaria, 2009).

Content differentiation

Content differentiation refers to the differentiation of the materials as prescribed by the curriculum (Hipsky, 2011). Algozzine and Anderson (2007) confirm that content differentiation is not varying the student objectives and lowering performance expectations, but rather teaching one concept or topic at different levels of complexity within the same classroom, meeting the diverse needs of all the students (Hall, 2002).

Process differentiation

Learning is an active process that is student-centred and requires a meaning-making approach (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). The active process requires integrating existing knowledge with new knowledge (Larsen-Freeman, 2011) by performing task-based or meaning-based activities (Orega, 2011). Instruction needs to be contextualised to help the student make meaning and should include numerous strategies that support the individual needs of the student to make information more comprehensible (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). Learning requires comprehensible input (language that students can understand) (Hall, 2002) through meaningful engagement that motivates the student as the activities are of interest and provide immediate feedback (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007).

Product differentiation

Product differentiation allows the student to present their knowledge in various ways for the teacher to assess their learning in relation to the desired outcome or objective (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007; O'Meara, 2011). The student's product provides the teacher with information on how to adapt instruction to respond with specific literacy instruction and to create further opportunities to practise (Bernhardt, 2010).

Supportive environment

The environment in which language learning takes place plays an important role in enabling language learning in the classroom. Language instruction has to take into consideration the specific social environment, school culture and the instructional classroom.

Social environment

It is well documented that the social context influences language learning and has implications for language instruction (Grabe, 2009). People of similar cultural, linguistic and socio-economic background usually live in the same areas. Consequently, their children will attend the same schools, increasing the proportion of students without the language of learning in these schools. Findings by the OECD (2015) showed that students perform better in schools that are more linguistically and economically diverse.

Often students without language skills for learning attend schools that are more socially disadvantaged and school safety can become an additional barrier to learning. Research findings confirm that academic performance is influenced by school safety and there is a link between poverty and poor school performance (Osher et al, 2013). When students feel safe, they are able to concentrate better, use higher order cognitive functions and participate in classroom activities (Mabasa, 2013).

School culture

In addition, there are specific characteristics that have been associated with higher literacy achievement initiatives. Using the PIRLS 2006 data, Zimmerman (2017) found the organisational climate of the school to be an important indicator of literacy achievement. What distinguished schools with higher literacy levels was the active role of the principal, stakeholder involvement and teachers taking responsibility for literacy development. The heads of departments served as mentors and advisers to teachers and performance was monitored with monthly meetings. In addition, several strategies were used to create and develop literacy among students.

Instructional classroom

The functionality and feel of the classroom creates an enabling environment for language learning. The classroom should not only be inviting but also functionally divided into different learning areas (Hipsky, 2011). The different learning areas should allow for independent activities, quiet areas and co-operative areas and provide materials that reflect home and cultural settings (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). The organisation of the classroom should allow for interaction between the teacher and the students, and among students (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). Increased teacher–student and student–student interactions lead to more language use in the classroom (Bernhardt, 2010).

Grouping students with diverse abilities to encourage group interactions enables language learning (Tomlinson & Edison, 2003). The manner in which students are grouped depends on the purpose for the grouping and can range from whole class to small groups or individual instruction (Fisher et al, 2008). There are extensive positive research findings confirming that language learning is

more effective when students are involved in curriculum-based, problem-solving activities where they are encouraged to talk and work collaboratively (Mercer & Howe, 2012).

In addition, the classroom can be used as a literacy resource through wall charts, displaying themes and showcasing the students' work (Rock et al, 2008). Visual supports of different types of wall charts, themed sections and evidence of the students' work provide scaffolds for the students to use (Santamaria, 2009). Interactive word walls are useful to introduce and reinforce the students' knowledge of words and should be arranged in themes for older primary school students (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007).

Teacher education

Teachers are key contributors to improving language proficiency (Fleisch, 2008). The quality of instruction that students receive is significant in determining language success as is the teacher's belief in his or her own ability and that of the student (Blair et al, 2007). Teacher competency requires an understanding of what language is and how the student develops language in a variety of settings (Nel & Nel, 2012). In addition, teachers also have a reflective role and need to be continually evaluating their knowledge base and instructional preferences, and assessing the effectiveness of their classroom practices to ensure that the needs of the students are being met (Tomlinson, 2000; Rock et al, 2008).

For effective language instruction, the teacher must know the curriculum to understand the content of the subject and the curriculum across the different grades (Walton, 2011). In addition, teachers need to understand the beneficial and limiting effects of transfer from home language to the language of learning (Brown, 2007) as well as cross-linguistic influences (Koda, 2007). To have a better understanding of transference and cross-linguistic influences, it is important to consider the orthographic and linguistic differences in languages (Pretorius, 2010). This requires that teachers are proficient in both languages to understand the influence of the two languages on learning and the similarities and differences between the languages, making instruction more explicit and applicable.

However, Walton (2015) draws attention to the challenges that academic institutions face to provide 'conceptually coherent and pedagogically appropriate' courses in teacher education that balance the needs of the context with research-based practices on language development. Teachers need to receive special training in meeting the challenges of teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students (EU, 2015). Furthermore, in-service teachers do not always have the skills to implement inclusive practices such as applying flexible teaching and learning skills that support all students (Engelbrecht et al, 2016).

Conclusion

To conclude, enabling language learning in a multilingual classroom is complex and requires a multilevel approach to integrate, support and instruct students in the schooling system so that they can achieve academically. Language should not be a barrier to learning but an opportunity to respect diversity and create innovative ways for learning.

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SECTION II

Proactive interventions and support for learning and learner development in multilingual settings

Multilingualism as a resource for teaching and learning: Overcoming persistent challenges

Folake Ruth Aluko

Introduction

English has been described as an international language, a link language, a library language, and it is considered to be a window to the rapid progress of technology and advanced scientific knowledge (Dash & Dash, 2007). One could also agree with Brutt-Griffler (2017) that around the world English has become a language of multilinguals. Nonetheless, this does not negate the reality of the multilingual nature of classrooms facing teachers today. Students come to classrooms from different backgrounds with complex diversities, among which is language. For instance, according to the European Commission (2018), growing numbers of children — with a proportion ranging from 1 per cent to 40 per cent in European classrooms — have a mother tongue that is different from their language of instruction. The situation is exacerbated in Africa, which presents some of the world's most diverse and vital multilingual situations (Juffermans & Abdelhay, 2016). Therefore, multilingualism is not an exception but the rule because more than two-thirds of the world's population speaks or understands at least two languages (Wong, 2016). According to the British Council (2006), a multilingual classroom — in contrast to a monolingual one where all students speak the same language — is one where learners speak a variety of first languages. It can also be considered a situation 'where many or even most of the pupils speak another language at home than the language of instruction … and are confronted with the national standard language for the first time at school' (School Education Gateway, 2016).

Research in the past three decades lends credence to the fact that children learn better when they are first taught in their home language (or L1) in the primary school (Rassool & Edwards, 2010). We should celebrate multilingualism because children bring a multitude of languages and language skills to the

classroom (Carstens, 2015; European Commission, 2018). However, touting multilingualism as a resource for teaching and learning raises some serious questions. For instance, to what extent has the orthography of the language been developed? How important is the literacy level of students in their home language to multilingualism? What are the beliefs of parents, teachers and policy-makers regarding home language use, and to what extent are these stakeholders in favour of its use? If not in favour, what efforts can be made to overcome these issues? To what extent have teachers been trained to use the language for teaching? To what extent are funds being made available to support its use? Given the prevalent conditions in multilingual classrooms, what affordances should be present for multilingualism to work as a learning resource? The questions raised reflect some of the challenges confronting the use of multilingualism as a resource for teaching and learning.

Reasons for multilingual classrooms

The major reason for multilingual classrooms all over the world is migration — the world has become a global village. For instance, according to the OECD (2015), more than a million migrants landed in Europe in 2015 alone. Although getting accurate statistics on international migrants to South Africa is a nightmare, there is ample evidence that the country is a hub — especially for African migrants (Africa Check, 2016). Multilingualism can also be attributed to other reasons depending on the context. For instance, in South Africa, which has 11 official languages, the changes in the educational landscape subsequent to the apartheid era, and the unplanned consequences thereof, have changed previously monolingual classrooms into multicultural ones (Hooijer & Fourie, 2009; News24, 2014). If a society like South Africa already has its multifaceted languages, migrants speaking other languages compound the situation in the classroom, making them even more diverse with new challenges. One of these is that learners have to be taught in the lingua franca that has been adopted by the country, which in most cases is not the same as their mother tongue. The European Commission (2015) describes such children as 'without the language of instruction'. Before children can maximise their potential, they are saddled with the responsibility of learning the language of instruction and excelling in it. Unfortunately, sticking to only one language of instruction in a multilingual setting presents many challenges. Research has shown that when children are not taught in their L1 in the early years, they struggle to perform well (Rassool & Edwards, 2010). According to the European Commission (2015; 2018), research has also shown that children who struggle with the language of instruction generally do less well in basic skills than their counterparts and are more prone to leaving school prematurely, while those that stay often struggle with lower levels of attainment throughout their school days.

The potential benefits of a multilingual classroom

Because of the challenges prevalent in a multilingual classroom, there is advocacy for the adoption of multilingualism as a resource for teaching and learning (International Literacy Association [ILA], 2016). For instance, one cannot deny that children come to the classroom with rich experience that could be of value to their learning, if this potential is maximised. Research shows that children with such skills 'demonstrate superior metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities' (Haukås, 2016), although there are necessary conditions for this to work, which include literacy in their L1 (Moore, 2006). Another positive factor is that when children are exposed to learning in their mother tongue, their confidence, their cultural awareness and pride in their culture is boosted (European Commission, 2015: 12). In addition, the ILA (2016) reiterates that the ability to speak multiple languages is a coveted skill in today's economy, which is influencing some parents to embrace and appreciate its presence in a school. Multilingualism, if well implemented, encourages higher levels of community engagement and academic achievement across the board (ILA, 2016). Unfortunately, however, it seems that there is no general understanding of its value.

Cenoz (2003: 71) defines multilingualism as 'the acquisition of a non-native language by learners who have previously acquired or are acquiring two other languages'. Thus, one could relate the acquisition of English, as a medium of instruction in most African schools, to multilingualism. However, the question is, 'to what extent have African children been grounded in their L1?' Many countries on the continent have adopted English as their official language, which UNESCO (2013) defines as 'a language designated by law to be employed in the public domain'. It thus becomes the language of instruction (used either exclusively or alongside another recognised African language), business, politics and the media. Despite the awareness of the value of the use of the mother tongue in teaching and learning, research shows that most parents want their children to be taught in English due to its perceived international value (Dash & Dash, 2007; DBE, 2012; Plonski, Teferra & Brady 2013).

All the above could be regarded as 'affordances', which can be loosely referred to as possibilities. I shall develop this term and its application to multilingual classrooms later in this chapter.

Some prevalent challenges in a multilingual classroom setting

Multilingual and multicultural learning space is complex (Lauridsen & Lilemose, 2015). Research shows that teachers find teaching in a multilingual classroom 'challenging and difficult' (Hooijer & Fourie 2009). For instance, citing Haukås (2016: 2–3), language teachers should ideally be able to meet several, if not all, of the following requirements:

- They should be multilingual themselves and serve as models for their learners.
- They should have a highly developed cross-linguistic and metalinguistic awareness.
- They should be familiar with research on multilingualism.
- They should know how to foster learners' multilingualism.
- They should be sensitive to learners' individual cognitive and affective differences.
- They should be willing to collaborate with other (language) teachers to enhance learners' multilingualism.

Unfortunately, research shows that very few teachers meet these requirements in a multicultural setting (Hooijer & Fourie, 2009; Haukås, 2016; Aluko, 2017).

Another challenge is the negative perception of the use of the mother tongue, which scholars have attributed to failures in the management of multilingualism, in the teaching of the mother tongues, and in the teaching methods adopted for ESL and EFL; and the failure to structure English language acquisition programmes around multilingual learning (Negash, 2011; Plonski et al, 2013). If the foundational requirement for children to learn another language, different from their mother tongue, is their being grounded in the latter, one wonders to what extent the language orthography, teacher training and resources have been geared towards this. Research shows that children are not always provided with support and opportunities to learn their mother tongue (European Commission, 2015; 2018), while the banning of the use of the mother tongue is still rife in schools (Erling et al, 2017).

In addition, there is evidence that teachers' attitudes towards migrant children or even multilingualism itself are not always encouraging in a multicultural classroom (Rassool & Edward, 2010; European Commission, 2018). Research shows that teachers' beliefs are central to their decision-making in the classroom (Haukås, 2016).

Additionally, most schools are underresourced and are, therefore, poorly equipped to support the learning of children who are not fluent in the language of instruction (Rassool & Edwards, 2010; News24, 2014; European Commission, 2018). This becomes more complex 'in an era of tight budgets, diverse priorities, and political sensitivities' (ILA, 2016). However, sometimes where multilingualism has been adopted, the problem is not the absence of policies, but the lack of political will to back it up.

In their comparative study of the opportunities and challenges in multilingual classrooms of two countries (Ghana and India), Erling et al (2017: 14) sum up the challenges prevalent in a multilingual classroom (especially in developing countries). They reported these as:

- Lack of shared understanding of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) and how it should be implemented (particularly relevant for government schools);

- Broader issues within the education system that were perceived as hindering the provision of quality bilingual education (for example, assessment systems);
- A dearth of resources;
- Urgent need for clarification about classroom practices that teachers can adopt to support English-medium instruction (EMI) and the development of English language competence;
- A lack of appropriate teacher training and professional development.

Exploring affordances theory

'Affordances' has become a popular term that scholars use loosely, not as a theory, but as a conceptual understanding across many fields (Aronin & Singleton, 2012: 312). Therefore, one comes across terms such as 'ICT affordances' and 'affordances in higher education'. However, describing affordances as mere 'possibilities' would limit its actual meaning. Gibson (1979: 127) originally coined the term 'affordances' to describe the complementarity between an animal and its environment. This would seem to mean 'a resource that the environment offers any animal that has the capabilities to perceive and use it' (Chemero, 2003: 182). At the heart of Gibson's theory 'lies a transactional belief about people–environment reciprocity; the observer and the environment have an active, reciprocal, mutually supportive, complementary, and equal relationship' (Clark & Uzzell, 2006: 178). However, to Chemero, 'the formal definition of affordances as relations between organisms and environments is incomplete because affordances cannot be properties, or even features, of the environment alone' (2003: 184, 187). He argues, 'Affordances are relations between the abilities of organisms and features of the environment' (Chemero, 2003: 189). This implies that 'affordances do not disappear when there is no local animal to perceive and take advantage of them' (2003: 193). 'However, affordances do depend on the existence of some animal that could perceive them, if the right conditions were met' (Chemero, 2003: 193). Therefore, though 'they offer opportunities for action, they do not force the individual to follow a certain course of action' (Kordt, 2018: 136). According to Kordt, 'The affordance is a quality neither of the environment nor of the organism but emerges through their interaction' (2018: 136). Some scholars (Gaver, 1991; Kyttä, 2002) have attempted to identify different types of affordances. For instance, Kyttä (2002: 109) differentiates between four 'levels of affordances', which are 'potential' (existing, but not necessarily perceived), 'perceived' (existing and perceived, but may not be used), 'utilised' (existing, perceived and used), and 'shaped' affordances (the used ones that impact the environment/user).

Implications of affordances theory for multilingual classrooms

Although it is not my intention here to interrogate the theory of affordances, it would be interesting to see to what extent the theory could assist us in maximising prevalent affordances to overcome persistent challenges in multilingualism. Earlier I identified some of these affordances, for instance, the rich language that learners bring to the classroom, their capabilities to learn and the potential which teachers could unleash in them, but these all need to be backed up with relevant policies.

According to scholars (Aronin & Singleton, 2012; Kordt, 2018), the theory of affordances can cover all the vast areas of multilingualism, which include teaching and learning, research, and its political and social contexts. In the words of Kordt (2018), because 'affordances are located between past experience and potential future action, affordance theory takes prior learning experiences, future learning opportunities as well as situational motivational factors into account'.

In their work, *Affordances theory in multilingualism studies*, Aronin and Singleton (2012: 313) identified the three basic elements of multilingualism as the user, the language(s) and the setting. This they represented in a triangle as depicted in Figure 4.1.
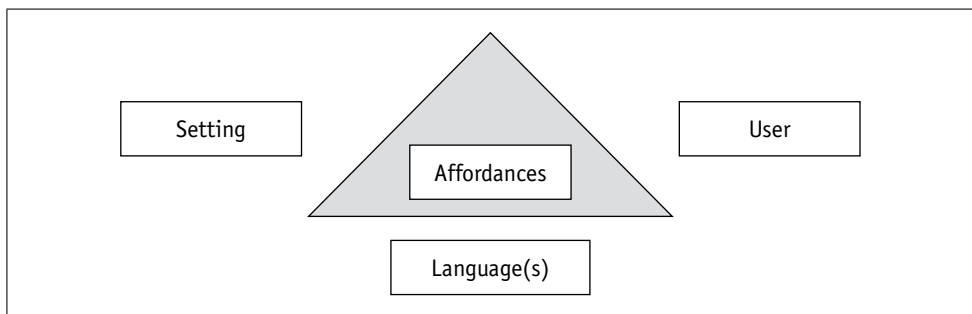
Figure 4.1: Affordances generating tripartite frame of reference
Source: Aronin & Singleton, 2012: 313

According to the authors, the affordances in the middle of the triangle show the possibilities that exist in a multilingual classroom. However, the outcome would depend on the extent of the interaction between each of these. This could be between the setting and the user, the language and the user, the setting and the language, and vice versa. The figure shows the complex system relationships that exist in multilingualism (Chemero, 2003; Aronin & Singleton, 2012). Aronin and Singleton (2012: 322) stress the following for affordances to work:

- Sets of affordances are required before a given action may be performed or a given goal attained.

- Each action or goal requires the availability of its own specific set of affordances.
- Exactly which, how many, and in what configuration affordances need to be present depends on the particular nature of the relevant action, goal, actor (speaker) and environment (sociolinguistic setting).
- The practical implication of this perspective for researchers is that it is of importance to identify the set of affordances pertaining to any particular goal.

I discuss overcoming persistent challenges in a multilingual classroom using the three basic elements of multilingualism, that is, the 'setting', the 'user' and the 'language(s)' within 'affordances' as a framework.

The setting in the context of this chapter refers to external factors that affect the use of multilingualism as a resource. Factors include policies (such as LiEP), funding, research, language development, the number of teachers, school resources (for example, classroom and teaching aids) and assessment practices.

The user refers to learners and teachers. Around this are the issues of teacher professional development, teacher perception and learners' backgrounds and capabilities.

The language(s) refers to the adopted lingua franca and other languages that may be present in the classroom. Due to the intertwined nature of the persistent challenges confronting the use of multilingualism as a resource in classrooms, I decided to discuss these issues in the next section by focusing on affordances that would fit into the three basic elements of multilingualism highlighted earlier.

Overcoming persistent challenges in multilingual classroom by maximising affordances

The social context and policy considerations

According to Kordt (2018: 142), the larger social context is significant for the emergence, perception and use of affordances for multilingualism. This brings to the fore the issue of governance leadership, which according to the ILA (2016), is needed 'at all different levels in order to encourage growth and understanding of the importance of multilingualism'. The association stresses that it is necessary 'to dispel the myths surrounding bilingualism primarily that learning two or even three languages as a child brings confusion and lowers academic achievement' because research proves otherwise (Cummins, 2007).

At the governmental level is the enactment of policies (for instance, LiEP) to make multilingualism effective as a resource (ILA, 2016). The government also needs to take a stand on the use of the mother tongue in order to assist children to develop competencies in other languages. Even though the use of the mother tongue as a learning resource at the beginner's level has been found to be effective, many parents in South Africa prefer their children to be taught in English

(Maswanganye, 2010; Plonski et al, 2013). One of the ways to facilitate this process, according to the European Commission (2015: 11), is to develop the necessary curricula and expose the public to both formal and informal learning of a mother tongue. Related to this is the development of the curriculum for teacher education. It is necessary to include training on how to teach in a multilingual classroom and to make available qualified mother-tongue teachers (European Commission, 2015; ILA, 2016).

The school context

Fiebich (2014: 153) refers to all related school context issues as 'institutional affordances', which are necessary to be aligned for effective use of multilingualism as a resource. For instance, the level of support provided to teachers and learners is crucial to the success of using multilingualism as a learning resource. Teachers need support during class sessions, but many schools, especially in the developing context, are understaffed (Hooijer & Fourie, 2009). Teacher professional development through in-service training is also crucial to the success of multilingualism in schools. Through professional development, teachers need to be exposed to diverse teaching strategies such as code-switching, which could be adapted to the use of multilingualism (Cummins, 2007; European Commission, 2015). It is ironical that speaking a mother tongue is still banned in some schools in the developing context due to the monolingual view of teaching the adopted lingua franca (Cook, 2007; Cummins 2007; Tan 2015; Erling et al, 2017). On the contrary, there is extensive empirical research that supports the interdependence of literacy-related skills and knowledge across languages (Cummins 2007: 233). If prevalent affordances in a classroom are not maximised, according to Erling et al (2017: 12), this can result in the language of instruction constituting a barrier to good pedagogic practice and can limit opportunities for communication.

In addition, 'targeted and continued language support' has been found to impact children's performance, while outside school support — which could be in the form of homework clubs, out-of-school activities, mentoring, coaching and advice — has also been found to be effective (European Commission, 2015: 11).

The European Commission also discourages the popular practice of separating migrant children from the mainstream, and the use of assessment tools and assessors with negative perceptions of migrant children's abilities, which misjudge their standards in some places (European Commission, 2015: 10, 12). This is because these work against migrant children learning the language of instruction. Another side of this coin in the developing context is a practice of classifying schools based on racial and socio-economic status. When this occurs, children that need assistance are often pushed to underfunded and understaffed schools. According to the OECD (2015), it is better to allow learners of diverse backgrounds to come together, albeit with support such as financial incentives and improved curricula.

Research and collaboration

Research is important both at the governmental and at the school levels to test what works and what does not when using multilingualism as a resource. In this regard, the European Commission (2015: 15) has called for 'evaluative research which will provide a better evidence base in this area of education policy and practice'. It is necessary to encourage collaboration at all levels of education that will lead to the sharing of good practices.

Linked to this is the dissemination of research findings. I have already mentioned some of the myths — the negative perceptions that some teachers have of migrant children; that starting learners off with the use of the mother tongue does not work; and the unsubstantiated perception that learning more than one language negatively affects learners. The dissemination of research findings can be used to dispel these myths and a host of others.

Combating negative perception and negative attitude

Research shows that not all teachers have a positive perception and attitude towards children that struggle with language (Commission, 2015). According to the European Commission, schools and teachers need to 'have positive attitudes towards migrant children if they are to achieve their potential and overcome language barriers' (2015: 12). Research indicates there is still a dearth of research in this area (Hooijer & Fourie, 2009).

Parental support

Parental support is also very important because research shows that it improves children's attendance, behaviours and attitudes to learning, and creates mutual trust and understanding between teachers and parents (European Commission, 2015: 11). Unfortunately, this may be quite challenging where parents are illiterate or where children come from child-headed homes, which is prevalent in southern Africa due to the scourge of diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Funding

Unfortunately, aligning most of the affordances above will be impossible without adequate financial support, which is needed for resources, teacher assistants, research, the development of language orthography and textbooks, and non-formal and informal learning of language (European Commission 2015; Lauridsen et al, 2015).

Conclusion

Although the use of multilingualism is being encouraged as a learning resource in schools, the complexities that exist in a multicultural classroom make this a Herculean task. The social context, which brings to the fore government,

policies, teacher education, funding and parental role issues, is also important. Both teachers and learners find a multilingual classroom challenging. However, the complexities are not insurmountable if all stakeholders perceive existing affordances and maximise them. The focus should always be 'to create a learning environment that promotes language acquisition' (ILA, 2016) given its importance to acquiring knowledge.

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Supporting learners with dyslexia in multilingual classrooms through the use of mobile devices

Megan Blamire & Margaret Funke Omidire

Introduction

The implementation of mobile devices in the classroom environment has led to advancements in the field of education. The research on the adoption and use of mobile devices indicated overwhelmingly that they have a positive impact on learners' engagement with learning (Benton, 2012; Henderson & Yeow, 2012; Smith, 2012; Clark & Luckin, 2013; Bugaj, Hartman & Nichols, 2014; Roth, 2014). Learners find them easy to use and more appealing than traditional materials used in teaching (Gasparini & Culén, 2013), and findings show increased motivation, enthusiasm, interest, engagement, independence and self-regulation, creativity and improved productivity (Clark & Luckin, 2013).

New technology is announced almost daily, and a mobile device like the Apple iPad has been at the centre of media attention since its release in 2010 (Benton, 2012). In the *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education*, the Department of Education (2001) emphasises the move towards inclusivity and the recognition of every learner's human rights, including the rights of those with learning disorders. Mobile devices have the potential to offer teachers the opportunity of teaching in a more inclusive classroom, particularly in multilingual settings with linguistic diversity.

Multilingualism can present as a challenge to those involved in the teaching of students with dyslexia and other specific learning disorders and learning barriers (Lannen et al, 2016). In South Africa, specifically, the prevalence of dyslexia appears to be hard to identify. Research seems to point to the fact that, because of the number of languages spoken in South Africa, it is difficult to pinpoint whether a child has dyslexia or simply a reading difficulty. This makes it particularly difficult for the teacher to support these students in the classroom. Some schools have

adopted various types of mobile devices to assist with supporting students with dyslexia and those flagged as being at risk of having dyslexia. When teaching in a multilingual setting, it is essential for the teacher to ensure that the pace of learning matches the students' current levels of learning in relation to their second language skills (Lannen et al, 2016). Therefore, teachers are faced with a challenging task of finding ways to support learners in these types of classroom settings. The students are also often faced with the double dimension of being diagnosed with dyslexia and learning in a language other than their home language and the language of their immediate environment. In many instances, these languages are different.

Understanding the student with dyslexia

By understanding the difficulties that face students with dyslexia, we are able to make connections between how these could possibly be overcome or maintained through the use of mobile devices. 'Dyslexia refers to a pattern of learning difficulties characterised by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities' (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). When trying to understand how students with dyslexia learn, we need to understand that learning is a dynamic process during which different parts of the brain interact with one another — various parts of the brain that deal with visual, auditory, memory, understanding and co-ordinating aspects may all be used simultaneously to tackle a task (Reid, Strnadová & Cumming, 2013). This being said, students with dyslexia face many challenges within the classroom.

Students with dyslexia experience difficulties with taking notes; planning and writing essays, letters or reports; reading and understanding new terminology; revising for examinations; communicating knowledge and understanding in examinations; and forgetting names and factual information (Stienen-Durand & George, 2014). According to Bell (2013), dyslexia is a language-based learning disorder referring to a cluster of symptoms, which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills, particularly reading. With this in mind, it is essential to note that reading can be described as a holistic activity because it utilises a combination of brain activities and, therefore, requires simultaneous processing of different components and a degree of task specialisation. It is often this simultaneous use of learning skills that is challenging for children with dyslexia, so tasks should be differentiated, structured, clarified and preferably focused towards the students' stronger areas of learning (Reid et al, 2013).

Students with dyslexia usually experience difficulties with other language skills such as spelling, writing and pronouncing words (Bell, 2013) and because of this, students with dyslexia may feel the need to compensate for their difficulties by using alternative modes of learning, both within and outside the classroom (Stienen-Durand & George, 2014). The most common difficulties experienced by students with dyslexia are related to language components, visual components and the need for rapid cognitive processing (Reid et al, 2013).

Symptoms of dyslexia seem to be the most evident in mathematics and literacy skills; however, it is crucial to understand that these are not the only symptoms. Research has increasingly focused on characteristics that could be assessed through neuropsychological evaluations like right–left confusion, finger agnosia, language and perceptual problems, and motor co-ordination problems (Fletcher, 2012). The core difficulty for learners with dyslexia involves word recognition, reading fluency, spelling and writing (International Dyslexia Association, 2013). It is important, however, to take into consideration that dyslexia can also be influenced by a learner's experiences and environmental factors.

Addressing the needs of students with dyslexia within the classroom setting

There have been many suggestions as to the best way of educating students with learning disorders such as dyslexia (Reid et al, 2013). With that being said, in South Africa most students with learning disorders like dyslexia are currently being taught within a multilingual and inclusive classroom environment, which makes it difficult for the teacher to identify these students. When addressing the needs of the student with dyslexia in a multilingual classroom, Lannen et al (2016) state that it is vital to consolidate learning before moving on to new information, as it is only through this process of overlearning that the child can acquire automaticity. They go further to explain that it is crucial that there is scope and opportunity for overlearning and that it should be integrated into the teaching programme (Lannen et al, 2016).

According to Reid et al (2013), students with dyslexia learn more efficiently when material is presented visually and learning is even more successful when they can interact with the material kinaesthetically, that is, when teaching and learning is multisensory. Research has also demonstrated that children with learning disorders like dyslexia learn best when teachers are able to respond to their needs with greater planning and structure — to allow more time for reinforcing learning and more continuous assessment — and that interventions that target and scaffold specific disorders allow children to make the greatest progress (Bell, 2013). This is especially crucial for students within a multilingual classroom setting.

Curriculum and training

When schools consider implementing ways to support learners with dyslexia within the multilingual setting, it is important to keep in mind that the term 'inclusion' implies that the needs of *all* students should be met within the mainstream school (Reid et al, 2013), including students with dyslexia. According to Lannen et al (2016), in every area of the curriculum, students are given frequent opportunities for exploratory talk and small group discussions, which aid comprehension and the transfer of learning.

It is noteworthy that much of the success of educational technology implementation rests on the level of training and how prepared teachers and schools are for the challenges that may arise during planning and implementation (Reid et al, 2013). Without a proper learning environment, management and facilitation, the potential of mobile devices may not be realised so it is essential to have a good management framework in place, both in the classroom and behind the scenes (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). According to Fabian, Topping and Barron (2018), at the end of the day, it is the teacher that drives the change in the classroom, meaning that it would be useful to address *how* teachers are being trained so that issues relating to the technology can be targeted, and teachers trained to use new technologies. Thus, it is imperative that professional development in this area becomes an integral part of teacher training. One example of the type of teacher training that is required is that given by 'Think Ahead Education Solutions', which partners with schools to integrate iPads into teaching and learning. It is critical that teachers are trained to support learners who find learning to read and write difficult, including those identified as having dyslexia and specific learning disorders so they can be included in education at all phases (Bell, 2013).

According to Tay (2016), at times schools can be hesitant to adopt mobile devices for teaching and learning because there is limited research on the impact of their use, particularly research that looks at the impact across a few years. With that being said, when implementing any educational intervention, it is vital to establish communication with everyone working with the student, as well as the parents or guardians, because a strong learning team that communicates and provides regular feedback will aid in the student's success at school and at home (Reid et al, 2013). It is also noteworthy that there needs to be a plan for managing things like recharging batteries, application deployment, backups, and protecting, repairing and replacing mobile devices as needed (Henderson & Yeow, 2012).

Using mobile devices to address the needs of the student with dyslexia

As technology becomes intertwined in our lives and with the younger generation being more technologically inclined, schools are attempting to use technology to help provide the best learning experiences for students (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). Mobile technology like the Apple iPad has been rapidly gaining in popularity as an educational tool (Reid et al, 2013). When the iPad was launched in 2010, numerous iPad-oriented projects and studies emerged worldwide within a diversity of settings. Especially in the field of education, interest reached unprecedented heights (Gasparini & Culén, 2013). Initial sales were largely to fans of Apple computers and technology enthusiasts wanting to use the iPad as a personal device, but attention soon turned to how the device could be used in business and educational settings (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). Since the emergence of mobile devices like Apple and Android tablets, much has been written about

their implications for reading and writing, and their potential to enhance and transform literacy instruction (Hutchison & Beschorner, 2014). Tablet devices are generally viewed as those that have an easy-to-use, intuitive interface (Culén & Gasparini, 2011). They can provide multiple means of representation, engagement, expression and benefits to all students, allowing them to experience learning in their strongest modalities (Reid et al, 2013). According to Smith (2012), the iPad is intended for practising, reinforcing, reviewing and creating. The same could be said about Android tablets.

Technology-mediated learning environments provide opportunities for students to search for and analyse information, solve problems, and communicate and collaborate, hence equipping them with a set of competencies to be competitive in the 21st-century marketplace (Lim et al, 2013).

Applications (Apps)

Apps are applications created for digital devices, such as tablets and smart phones, to serve a single, specific function and can be downloaded wirelessly or by connecting to a computer (Hutchison et al, 2012). Through inexpensive mobile applications (apps) that can be downloaded to and used on other devices, mobile devices appear to have unlimited potential for individualising teaching, learning and communication (Reid et al, 2013). Using mobile devices and their apps gives the students an additional mode to demonstrate their knowledge (Aronin & Floyd, 2013).

Many schools are already widely employing mobile devices, making it a matter of just adding the right applications to make classroom instruction more accessible to all students (Reid et al, 2013). Aronin and Floyd (2013) believe that one of the keys to success is to brainstorm ways to introduce the various apps and discuss what skills are necessary for the student to successfully navigate and interact with the chosen mobile device.

The functionality of these devices is through the use of apps, which customise the equipment to each individual, potentially converting them into the equivalent of a 'digital education prescription pad' (Reid et al, 2013). Apple and Android have a large number of applications supporting productivity and creativity. By using these, students may open up a possibility to play a more active role in their own education by, for example, designing a part of their own curriculum through the use of different apps (Gasparini & Culén, 2013). One of the advantages is that the apps can be selected for targeting instruction (Smith, 2012).

Many applications that are available for downloading on these devices give students with dyslexia the ability to be successful in inclusive settings by allowing them to have individualised technology toolkits at their fingertips (Reid et al, 2013). The focused nature of the apps makes it simple for students to complete the learning activities and, through the product created with the app, provide evidence of learning (Hutchison & Beschorner, 2014). Mobile devices and their

corresponding applications have the potential to increase the accessibility of educational materials, such as text, and enhance the presentation of concepts, as well as giving students a way to express themselves in different modalities (Reid et al, 2013). The simplified nature of mobile devices and their apps may provide the scaffolding that is needed to begin integrating digital technology into literacy instruction (Hutchison & Beschorner, 2014).

It is also beneficial to consider that mobile devices are widely recognised and used by students of all ages, making them more readily adopted by students with learning disorders and their peers in a multilingual classroom setting (Reid et al, 2013).

Flexibility and portability

Often schools choose to use tablet devices like the iPad because they allow for flexibility where teaching and learning may occur due to the portability and the plethora of educational apps available at no or low cost (Aronin & Floyd, 2013). Because of their portability, the devices can be carried and used anywhere, thus strengthening the ties from school to home and the community (Reid et al, 2013). Using mobile devices allows students to move between different locations with their devices and to communicate with others, and thus learn across space (Henderson & Yeow, 2012).

The mobility of tablet devices can offer great opportunities for learners to build meanings and experiences across different locations (Clark & Luckin, 2013). The mobility of tablet devices also allows for their use in a general education setting (Levine, 2013). Students and teachers are able to use the device in the classroom, on field trips, at home, or wherever activities take place and having this portability enables students to further explore their interests in a subject at any given location and time (Henderson & Yeow, 2012).

The mobility of tablet devices makes it easy and natural for students to problem-solve together when they encounter a problem (Hutchison & Beschorner, 2014). Mobile devices can, therefore, help children to augment their current environment by providing access to information while on the move (Henderson & Yeow, 2012).

Meeting the student's specific needs

All learners are different and require teaching and learning interactions that acknowledge these differences and provide suitable support (Clark & Luckin, 2013). There are countless opportunities to match children's preferences, strengths and needs with developmentally appropriate apps that link relationships between the abstract and everyday technologies relating to mathematics, science and engineering (Aronin & Floyd, 2013). The ability to customise a popular device to suit the needs of each individual student is motivating because it gives students

with specific needs something mainstream and non-stigmatising that is still engaging and interactive for them (Reid et al, 2013).

Mobile devices allow the teacher to do more one-on-one intervention (Smith, 2012). An additional benefit is that students with disabilities relating to speech or expressive language are able to communicate complex thought patterns, knowledge and interests through the use of mobile devices (Aronin & Floyd, 2013). The student's natural curiosity may also be demonstrated by increased verbalisations in students with disabilities, which is congruent with the literature stating how everyday interactions, when in an area of interest, foster language and literacy development (Aronin & Floyd, 2013). A mobile device that is owned by an individual learner and populated with material and applications that are suitable for their specific language needs, could be a powerful, portable and personal learning partner (Clark & Luckin, 2013). With the potential to link classroom learning to the real world, mobile devices have added a new approach to contextualising learning (Fabian et al, 2018).

Implementation

To implement the use of mobile devices, Aronin and Floyd (2013) recommend a teacher-led learning station with a small group of three or four students of mixed-ability levels as a natural way of presenting the new technology. The teacher should remain at the learning station while the mobile device is in use to facilitate social interaction, expand on the skills being taught and collect data on student performance. This gives the teacher an excellent opportunity to ask students 'what', 'why', 'when', 'who' and 'how' questions (Aronin & Floyd, 2013). The teacher's role will, therefore, change to focusing on developing the students' ability to take charge of their own learning as opposed to focusing solely on covering content (Tay, 2016).

Multisensory learning involves auditory, visual, kinaesthetic and tactile input, and mobile devices lend themselves well to all of these modes (Reid et al, 2013). In the classroom, mobile devices came to be viewed by the students as a tool for self-improvement in the educational arena (Gasparini & Culén, 2013). For children with difficulties such as dyslexia to have their needs fully met in mainstream schools, there is a need for all teachers to be familiar with the range of intervention approaches and resources for dyslexia, including opportunities for students provided by mobile technology (Reid et al, 2013). According to Tay (2016), if mobile technology is used in such a way as to enable task redesign, students can achieve the desired outcomes. The variables that were most prominent for the acceptance of the technology were creativity, attitude toward learning and the emergence of new social patterns (Culén & Gasparini, 2011). It has emerged that an essential part of using mobile devices successfully in an educational setting is having teachers manage and facilitate the learning environment around the specific mobile device (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). When used in the classroom,

technology can both engage students and prepare them for the world outside of the classroom (Levine, 2013).

Finding a tool that can be both remedial and compensatory is vital for the success of these students (Levine, 2013). In this new world, we use different technologies to seek and provide resources and information, express ourselves, communicate with others, create, consume and play, often assuming new multiple identities (Lim et al, 2013). It has been found that using mobile devices for literacy instruction not only supported student learning, but students were also highly engaged and able to demonstrate unique and creative ways of responding to text using a technology tool that offers some unique affordances to users (Hutchison et al, 2012). Pictures can easily be associated with words and meanings, and this breaks down the language barriers in multilingual classrooms.

Mobile devices, by their very nature, are inherently engaging to most young people, and their use can help students become engaged in almost any text — this makes them suitable as a compensatory strategy in general education settings. Tablet devices, in particular, can be used as an essential tool for successful reading remediation and compensatory strategies for students with learning difficulties (Levine, 2013).

Conclusion

At this point it is important to be reminded that we cannot expect mobile devices to teach — the teacher must still teach the concepts and skills (Smith, 2012). If teachers are able to transform their roles and their lessons, they will be able to utilise the potential that technology offers when it comes to enhancing learning for their students (Tay, 2016). Students of all abilities should be given every opportunity to learn in the style that works best for them, in both educational and community settings, and this technology is one tool that can be accessed to help accomplish this (Reid et al, 2013).

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Recontextualising discourse-intensive interventions for multilingual contexts: Implementing Quality Talk in China

Liwei Wei & P Karen Murphy

> *The purpose of discussion is to promote the social*
> *art of conversing, the intellectual art of qualifying,*
> *and the linguistic art of elaborating.*
>
> James Moffett[1] (1967: 28)

Introduction

To participate in 21st-century global competition, it is critical that students develop sufficient English language proficiency (that is, language and literacy skills). Unfortunately, English language learners (ELLs) in multilingual contexts often face multiple challenges when English serves as either the means or ends of instruction. Indeed, ELLs in a foreign language context in which English is not used during daily interactions (Dixon et al, 2012) have rather limited opportunities to construct or generate meaningful discourse in English. Such challenge is further compounded by the fact that teacher-centred, whole-class lectures are widely employed in multilingual contexts, resulting in minimal time for ELLs to practise English through oral or written discourse in class. Even in an L2 majority context, where ELLs are surrounded by English in the 'broader society' (Dixon et al, 2012: 9), they may still need to equip themselves with the language proficiency (for instance, content-specific vocabulary) requisite to engage effectively in the subject matter (such as science) taught in English (Kieffer et al, 2009).

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1   James P Moffett was a former teacher of French and English at Phillips Exeter Academy, and a research associate in English, Harvard Graduate School of Education. The quote is extracted from his report *Drama: What is happening, the use of dramatic activities in the teaching of English* (ED 017505).

Small-group discussions promoting English language proficiency

In an effort to address these challenges, researchers have endeavoured to design effective interventions for ELLs such that they can harness English as a tool for learning, shifting from *learning English* to *learning via English*. Among these effective interventions, a small-group, text-based discussion approach appears to be effective in promoting English language and literacy skills for ELLs (for example, Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999; Zhang, Anderson & Nguyen-Jahiel, 2013). Indeed, small-group discussions provide varied and increased opportunities for ELLs to use English in meaningful contexts through oral discourse (Cheung & Slavin, 2012). They afford a more friendly and affective climate such that ELLs with different levels of language proficiency are likely to produce more oral discourse in English than in a whole-class setting (Zhang et al, 2013). Importantly, when students use English as a tool to co-construct knowledge with other group members, they have the opportunity to develop an in-depth comprehension of the English text being discussed (Murphy et al, 2009), thus enhancing their English reading comprehension at both basic (for example, locate information in the text or make simple inferences) and higher levels (for instance, evaluate information in the text).

Theoretical underpinnings for small-group discussions

Small-group discussions are employed by researchers who are grounded in theories from second language acquisition and educational research. These theories include: (1) second language acquisition (SLA) hypotheses (that is, interaction hypothesis, comprehensible input hypothesis and comprehensible output hypothesis), (2) sociocultural and social constructivist theories and (3) reader response theory.

Interaction hypothesis rests on the idea that language modifications during conversational interactions can contribute to the comprehensibility of input, and thus promote language acquisition (Long, 1985), which is central to SLA hypotheses. Indeed, language learners need to be exposed to comprehensible input in the target language that is only slightly above their current language proficiency to acquire the target language (that is, comprehensible input hypothesis; Krashen, 1988). Further, during a small-group discussion, students also need to produce language output and adjust their language to make it comprehensible to other group members such that language learners can co-construct and negotiate meaning in the target language, leading to the development of language proficiency (that is, comprehensible output hypothesis; Swain, 1985). In sum, language-rich discussions allow ELLs to engage in extended, meaningful interactions. That is, ELLs have increased opportunities to receive comprehensible input and generate comprehensible output while making and building meaning in English within small groups.

Sociocultural theorists view the language of interaction as a mediational tool for learning and argue that it is through interaction that language as a higher mental function is learned (DeNicolo, 2010). Social constructivists, on the other hand, perceive reading as a transaction between the reader, text, peers and teacher (McElvain, 2010), stressing that knowledge is constructed socially and requires scaffolding from the more capable other, such as the facilitating teacher or the more proficient peer in the group (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978). During a small-group discussion, when students are heterogeneously grouped, the more knowledgeable other in the group can help the rest of the group members develop their potential in using English to think and talk within their zone of proximal development, and subsequently enhance their English oral language and literacy skills. For example, the more proficient peer in the group can help explain the meaning of certain vocabulary or written discourse for other group members. Hence, students in the group have the opportunity to pick up new language and to model after the more proficient peer. Ultimately, ELLs are expected to internalise what is shared and constructed within small groups during the discussion into their own reading comprehension of the text written in English.

Grounded in Rosenblatt's (1968) reader response theory, reading is viewed as 'a transaction between the reader and the text in which the reader comes to the text with his or her individual experiences, beliefs, and values' (Kim 2004: 146). Kim (2004) has stressed that readers actively construct the meaning of the text with their personal experiences and beliefs, and interact with the text. Both the reader and the text play central roles in the process of reading. When readers construct the meaning of a text, the meaning lies within both the reader and the text. Through small-group discussions, ELLs are afforded the opportunity to construct the meaning of the text by connecting their prior knowledge or experience to the text being discussed.

Small-group discussions in ELL research

The effectiveness of small-group discussion in promoting reading comprehension has been identified for English-speaking students (Murphy et al, 2009), yet relatively little research has been conducted to examine its effect on ELLs. A systematic literature review has been conducted on 17 peer-reviewed articles that examine the use of small-group discussions among ELLs with respect to the context, small-group discussion intervention, professional development, as well as major findings on the outcome measures (Wei, 2019).

Contexts

The context of English learning (for instance, L2 majority vs foreign language context), the broader cultural background (for example, Western culture vs culture rooted in Confucianism), as well as the profile of participants (for instance, age or low vs high English language proficiency) are essential context-related

factors that need to be considered when implementing small-group discussion interventions. For example, Chi (1995) implemented small-group discussions in a foreign language context for ELLs in Taiwan, which is strongly influenced by Confucianism (for example, teachers are highly respected as the authority of knowledge). The authors recognised that changing from a teacher-centred Initiate-Response-Evaluate (IRE) mode of instruction (Mehan, 1979) to a small-group discussion, where students take on increasing interpretative authority, might be too challenging. Sensitive to the effects of learning context, the author conducted the intervention in a volunteer-based, informal setting.

In terms of the participants' profile, the prior research mainly focused on two groups of ELLs: (1) fourth- or fifth-grade ELLs who are immersed in an English-speaking country, namely an L2 majority context; and (2) ELLs in high schools or colleges who are exposed to English mostly in a classroom, with English as the goal of instruction, and are immersed in a foreign language context. This indicates that there is very little research on young ELLs in a foreign language context, which could be an optimal period for ELLs to acquire a second language (Neville & Bruer, 2001; Hakuta, Bialystok & Wiley, 2003).

Small-group discussion interventions

As indicated by Murphy et al (2009), not all types of talk are equally effective at promoting reading comprehension. In fact, only certain types of talk or discourse elements (eg authentic question or elaborated explanation) are proximally indicative of student high-level comprehension (Soter et al, 2008). A majority of the reviewed studies examined discussion approaches that have been empirically established and found to be effective in terms of promoting English-speaking students' reading comprehension (Murphy et al, 2009). These are Book Club, Instructional Conversations, Literature Circles and Collaborative Reasoning (for example, Kim 2004; Farris, Nelson & L'Allier, 2007; Shen 2013; Zhang et al, 2013).

It is worth noting that these established discussion approaches are often characterised as aligning with different stances, including efferent, expressive and critical-analytic. The goal of the specific stance of the discussion approach determines the instructional goal. For instance, a discussion approach (such as Instructional Conversations) with an efferent stance requires readers to retrieve information from the text, whereas an expressive approach to discussion (such as Literature Circles) encourages readers to make connections between their personal experiences and feelings and the text. A discussion approach with a critical-analytic stance (for instance, Collaborative Reasoning) necessarily requires the readers to think critically about the text and forward arguments with reasons and evidence. The results yielded from the reviewed studies seemed to suggest that small-group discussions with different stances may influence ELLs' English language and literacy in different ways. While efferent and expressive stances can help students connect the text with their prior experiences and retrieve information from the text to facilitate the comprehension of the text, the critical-analytic stance propels

students to extend beyond a basic comprehension of the text and to approach the text at a deeper level.

As a case in point, Zhang et al (2013) implemented Collaborative Reasoning (CR) among fifth-grade ELLs in the United States, adopting a critical-analytic stance. The authors emphasised that the CR group outperformed the control group in terms of presenting satisfactory reasons, evidence and counter-arguments, which aligned with the emphasised critical-analytic stance. Notably, an ideal discussion approach needs to incorporate the strengths of different stances (that is, efferent, expressive and critical-analytic) to augment literacy skills in the target language in order to facilitate basic and high-level comprehension of the English text.

Professional development

The professional development and ongoing support provided by the researchers plays an essential role in facilitating the effective implementation as well as the validity and sustainability of the small-group discussion intervention. To ensure the effectiveness of the discussion approach, practitioners need the skills requisite to facilitate productive discussions, such as explicitly teaching students critical discourse elements before the discussion and probing for elaborated responses during the discussion. However, the majority of the reviewed studies did not include professional development for teachers or provided little information regarding teacher training, since most of them had researchers as practitioners during the intervention. Studies that particularly stressed workshop and training for teachers were often those with the implementation of established discussion approaches, such as Collaborative Reasoning and Literature Circles (for example, Saunders & Goldenberg 1999; McElvain, 2010; Zhang et al, 2013). As a case in point, McElvain (2010) met with the teacher on a weekly basis to facilitate the implementation of the intervention. Specifically, the researcher demonstrated lessons and collaboratively worked with the teacher to come up with solutions to problems that occurred during the implementation of the intervention. During coaching sessions, the researcher also provided feedback to the participating teacher.

Promising outcomes

Based on the review of extant studies, researchers revealed positive changes in the ELLs' oral discourse, English language and literacy proficiency and engagement after ELLs participated in small-group discussions. First, in terms of the ELLs' oral discourse, researchers identified oral discourse patterns indicative of high-level comprehension and engagement. For instance, Ayaduray and Jacobs (1997) documented that students were able to generate higher-order questions and elaborated responses after receiving instruction on asking questions and participating in small-group discussions, which was less likely to emerge in whole-class lectures. Kim (2004: 150) perceived engagement as a 'cognitive

phenomenon in which students are mentally functioning' (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) and coded engagement based on the five types of responses (that is, literal comprehension, personal connections, cross-cultural themes, interpretation and evaluation) forwarded by Eeds and Wells (1989). Kim (2004) analysed student discussion discourse and found that participating ELLs developed more diverse responses indicative of student engagement. The authors maintained that literature discussions helped ELLs in the study to engage emotionally and cognitively with the text, which contributed to enjoyable experiences with reading literature and increased the ELLs' dialogic interactions and communicative competence in English.

Second, in terms of language and literacy outcomes, it has been found that participation in small-group, text-based discussions can help students enhance their oral language proficiency, reading comprehension and writing skills. Specifically, as reported by Zhang et al (2013), ELLs who participated in CR discussions performed better than the control group in English listening and reading comprehension. CR students also produced more coherent narratives in storytelling tasks and wrote essays with more diverse vocabulary, reasons and evidence. Saunders and Goldenberg (1999) examined the effect of Instructional Conversations and literature logs on students' language-related skills and revealed a transfer effect from participation in small-group discussions to an increase in the ELLs' language and literacy skills, such as vocabulary, comprehension and writing. It was reported that students who participated in Instructional Conversations were significantly better at comprehending the themes of stories in comparison to the control group.

Avoiding pitfalls: Implications for research and practice

Small-group discussion can serve as a promising approach to effectively promote English language proficiency of ELLs if major pitfalls are avoided. Further, its effect can be potentially optimised when context-related factors and the subsequent implementation of the intervention are considered. Gleaned from the prior literature synthesis, implications for recontextualising small-group discussion interventions for ELLs in various multilingual contexts are highlighted.

Recontextualise small-group discussion for ELLs

Although the results of these various studies were predominantly positive, several context-related factors need to be considered for recontextualisation of the intervention, such as the students' native language, their English language proficiency, goal of instruction, as well as cultural context. Indeed, when students share the same native language different from English, it is helpful to utilise their native language in explicit instruction (for instance, delivering the content in students' native language) to ensure understanding of the discourse elements central to productive discussions. If students have varied English language

proficiency, grouping them heterogeneously may be helpful for those who are low in language proficiency because they can model and learn from the more proficient student and still engage in the meaning-making of the text. A student who has higher English language proficiency may serve as the leader of the discussion group in guiding the discussion and also benefit from the input of students with diverse background knowledge, regardless of their language proficiency.

Another factor is cultural context, which may influence the extent to which teachers and students can adapt to the format of small-group discussions. For example, in Asian countries, such as China and Korea, their cultures are built upon Confucianism in which humility is highly valued. Hence, as addressed previously, professional development and ongoing support are needed for teachers in Asian cultures to familiarise them with the open participation nature of small-group discussions in order to optimise the effect of small-group discussions on Asian students. For instance, researchers can help teachers direct their attention to the release of responsibility and examine changes in the ELLs' English oral discourse once students take on interpretative authority in their groups.

Provide explicit instruction to bolster the ELLs' skills in conducting productive discussions

Students do not simply improve with the passage of time. That is, they do not naturally know how to conduct a productive discussion. Explicit instruction is necessary to help foster students' learning of critical skills (for example, asking higher order questions by referring to a set of question openers) to promote literacy (Marchand-Martella, Klingner & Martella, 2013). As a case in point, Ayaduray and Jacobs (1997) provided explicit instruction for students to learn about specific types of questions (that is, lower order, higher order and procedural) and responses (that is, unelaborated and elaborated) that students could generate during a small-group discussion. The study documented that after receiving the instruction, the treatment group was able to produce significantly more high-level thinking questions and provided more elaborated responses in comparison to students who did not receive the instruction. Explicit instruction may also include external language support. For instance, ELLs may benefit from question stems to help them produce high order questions (for example, Why were there …? What were the causes of …? or How did … affect …? Ayaduray & Jacobs, 1997: 564), as well as question stems that ELLs can utilise as an aid for negotiating meaning (for example, What does … mean?).

Incorporate different stances to promote both basic- and high-level comprehension

As stressed previously, different stances to discussion may help students achieve different goals in text comprehension. An ideal discussion approach may adopt multiple stances, namely efferent, expressive and critical-analytic stances, within one discussion approach. As such, ELLs are afforded more varied opportunities

to engage with the text at a higher level by activating and connecting their prior knowledge and experience to the text, referring to the text for evidence and reasons, and subsequently critically evaluating the information forwarded in the text.

Effective intervention implementation and ensuring quality through partnering with and supporting teachers

As noted in the literature review on small-group discussions for ELLs, limited information regarding professional development was provided in studies implemented in a foreign language context, possibly due to the fact that the researcher was also the practitioner in most of the studies. It should be noted, however, that professional development or ongoing support is essential for equipping the teacher with the knowledge and materials necessary to effectively and sustainably implement productive discussions in the classroom. Such professional development may include training on the discussion approach, materials essential for explicit instruction and constant communication with the teacher to regularly reflect on student discussions and think together to set future goals. While the teacher has more knowledge about her own students, curriculum and classroom, the researcher can act as a *critical friend* (Stenhouse, 1975) to support the implementation of an intervention approach. The researcher can help facilitate ELLs' language and literacy development by providing information on evidence-based effective interventions.

Productive discussions through Quality Talk

As elucidated throughout this chapter, there is ample evidence to suggest that small-group discussions can be useful pedagogical tools for promoting students' English-language learning as well as their text-based comprehension. That being said, it is also clear in the extant literature that not all discussion approaches are characterised by the same instructional goals, despite often sharing similar undergirding theoretical premises (Murphy et al, 2009). Within this section, we overview the Quality Talk (QT) discussion model as a promising approach for fostering students' oral and written English-language proficiency, as well as their critical-analytic thinking and reasoning. QT is a teacher-facilitated, small-group discussion approach, which is aimed primarily at enhancing students' ability to think critically and analytically about, around and with textual content (that is, high-level comprehension; Murphy et al, 2018). QT emerged as a result of a meta-analysis (Murphy et al, 2009) and analysis of discourse samples (Soter et al, 2008) representing major approaches to small-group, text-based discussions. As such, QT is, in many ways, an amalgamation of the very best features of the most effective approaches to small-group discussion. Further, recent empirical evidence suggests that QT is effective in promoting students' basic and high-level comprehension, as well as the oral reading fluency of native English speakers (Murphy et al, 2018). In

fact, such fluency gains were quite substantive, almost doubling those reported for US national norms. Given its effectiveness and unique focus on the nature of talk, our sense is that QT is particularly well suited to improving English proficiency in varied contexts involving oral and written tasks.

Quality Talk model

The QT model comprises four components: an ideal instructional frame, discourse elements, teacher modelling and scaffolding and pedagogical principles (Murphy & Firetto, 2018). The instructional frame indicates the conditions requisite for promoting productive talk about textual content, including teacher choice of text, student interpretative authority and turn control, students' sufficient prior knowledge of the text, pre- and post-discussion activities, including question generation and identification of main ideas and supporting details, and the use of small, heterogeneous ability groups, where teacher involvement fades as student knowledge and ability increases. The second component emphasises the discourse elements teachers explicitly teach to their students using a set of researcher-generated mini-lessons. Foremost among these are discourse indicators of critical-analytic thinking: asking authentic questions (for instance, uptake, higher-order thinking, speculation, connection or affective response) that invite a range of evidence-based, individual or co-constructed responses and that elicit high-level thinking (for example, Nystrand et al, 2003) and reasoned argumentation (Murphy, 2018). Over time and with regular practice in the small-group discussions, students internalise these ways of talking about text and begin using them to support their own thinking and that of their peers (Jadallah et al, 2011). The third component, teacher modelling and scaffolding, refers to the specific discourse moves (for example, prompting or challenging) that teachers employ to induct their students into the practices of productive talk (Van de Pol, Volman & Beishuizen, 2010; Wei & Murphy, 2018; Wei, Murphy & Firetto, 2018). Pedagogical principles, the fourth component, comprise understandings about language and the science of teaching that are essential in fostering a culture of dialogic inquiry in the classroom. These include endorsing language as a tool for thinking and interthinking, establishing normative discourse expectations for all group members, and achieving shared responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Murphy & Firetto, 2018).

Quality Talk professional development

Professional development (PD) in QT includes an initial multi-day workshop at the beginning of the school year, a mid-year follow-up, and monthly discourse coaching. In the initial workshop, teachers learn about each of the four components of QT, how to enact these components in their classrooms, and take part in QT discussions so they have a sense of what it is like to participate in productive talk. During the initial and follow-up workshops, recordings of QT in action and discourse transcripts serve as concrete examples of key features of productive

talk. Further, rooted in the development of teachers' discourse pedagogy, teachers not only learn about the discourse elements, but they also learn to identify the specific indicators of critical-analytic thinking as classroom discourse unfolds. Identification of discourse elements is supported by utilising modelling, scaffolding and extensive practice in the initial PD workshop. By scaffolding teachers' ability to discern what the talk means, they become adept at facilitating their classroom discussions and acquire the ability to hone their discourse pedagogy by coding and analysing their own data. During the initial workshop, teachers are also introduced to the QT mini-lessons (that is, lessons about the discourse elements specifically designed for upper elementary students). Ideally, QT mini-lessons are delivered by the teacher each week, followed by teacher-facilitated, text-based discussions in alignment with district curriculum.

Ongoing professional development is conducted through discourse coaching sessions, where teachers meet individually with discourse coaches approximately monthly. Prior to coaching sessions, teachers prepare by completing the Discourse Reflection Inventory for Teachers (DRIFT; Murphy & Firetto, 2018). The DRIFT was developed to help teachers gain a deeper understanding of the discursive features associated with critical-analytic thinking (for example, authentic questions, uptake or elaborated explanations) through the process of coding and reflecting on an excerpt of small-group discussion from their classroom. During coaching, teachers collaboratively review their DRIFT with a discourse coach in a positive and encouraging environment, and they communicate about successes and challenges, while also collaboratively setting goals for future discussions. Our sense is that the nature of the professional development gradually transitions interpretive authority of the effectiveness of the intervention from the researcher to the teacher in the same way that teachers release interpretive authority to students during the implementation of QT. These transitions ensure both the utility and longevity of QT as an instructional method and learning tool.

Recontextualising Quality Talk for English-language learning in mainland China

In this part of the chapter we present our own work on QT implemented in mainland China with implications for recontextualising discourse-intensive pedagogies in multilingual contexts. We delineate the context of the QT intervention pertaining to the characteristics of school, participants and text materials. In accordance with such contextual characteristics, we discuss the decisions made in the recontextualisation of QT. Drawing from the overview of extant literature, as well as QT interventions implemented in the United States, we specifically document adjustments made to professional development, delivery of explicit instruction, selection of discussed text, pre- and post-discussion activities and, more importantly, implementation of small-group discussions. In the end,

we present selected findings from the intervention and point out implications for future research.

Context of Quality Talk intervention in mainland China

School context

The QT intervention was implemented in a public middle school located in North China. According to the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, all Chinese students must receive nine-year compulsory education that spans across elementary school and middle school (Grades 1 to 9). High school education (Grades 10 to 12) is not mandatory but is required for tertiary education. In terms of English curriculum, the national standard for compulsory education requires that English be taught in public schools starting from Grade 3 (People's Republic of China Ministry of Education, 2011). It should be noted that English is a subject included in entrance exams for high school and university. In China, English proficiency is also considered a desirable skill when applying for jobs and graduate school (Hartse & Dong, 2015).

The school in the current study was located in a major city in North China where students share the same home language — Mandarin Chinese. In the school, only English language class is taught in English, and sometimes in combination with Mandarin Chinese to facilitate student understanding.

Participant context

The participants included 42 eighth-grade, Mandarin-speaking students from Level B (that is, limited English proficiency) and one English teacher with 20 years of teaching experience in middle and high school settings. Participants had low to intermediate English proficiency compared with their peers in the same school who were placed at Level A. It is worth noticing that even though students were divided into different classes for English and all had five years of prior English instruction, there still existed a wide variation of English literacy among students. During the intervention, students participated in QT discussions in groups of seven with a designated student leader.

Text materials

Participants' English classes centred on an English textbook (*English*, Eighth Grade, Vol. 1; Chen & Greenall, 2013) approved by the Ministry of Education and used nationally in public middle schools in mainland China. The textbook contained 12 modules, each with an overarching theme (such as sports, Lao She Teahouse or accidents). Each module included three units that focused on listening, reading, speaking and writing skills that revolved around the theme. In unit two of every module, students read a passage that served as the main text of the module. The length of each passage was approximately 200 to 250 words. Apart from the textbook, each participant was also provided with handouts prepared by a group of English teachers teaching the same grade and a published workbook that

accompanied the textbook. The workbook contained a variety of exercises (such as fill in the blanks, multiple choice questions or essays) that allowed students to practise and evaluate their grammar, English reading comprehension and writing. As such, for each unit, students read five to six English passages and completed the accompanying reading comprehension or writing exercises. Additionally, participants were given teacher-provided, English-written materials, depending on the individual teacher. For instance, our participating teacher often sourced additional online English materials (such as text or video) that corresponded to the theme of the module or published English books (for example, *Good English*). The textbook, workbook and teacher-provided materials all served as texts that students could discuss and/or refer to during the discussion. Before each QT discussion, the teacher would select one text from these materials for the discussion.

Recontextualisation of Quality Talk in an English language classroom in mainland China

In consultation with the teacher, we made several adjustments to the previously described QT intervention in an attempt to deliver an intervention that was effective and sustainable, as well as contextually and culturally situated. Herein, we delineate the reasoning behind each decision made and the steps taken to address the features of the context.

Professional development, on-going coaching and feedback sessions

Professional development, on-going coaching and constant feedback sessions were held during the intervention. As addressed earlier, teacher professional development was provided prior to the intervention to familiarise the teacher with the QT model and the intervention. Ongoing coaching and feedback sessions were conducted throughout the intervention so that the researcher could work with the teacher to reflect on students' discussions and set future goals to reinforce the ideas introduced during the professional development and optimise the effect of small-group discussions. Prior to the coaching session, the teacher and the researcher listened to the same small-group discussion, which was audio recorded, and they coded one teacher-facilitated English discussion using a predetermined discourse coding manual (Murphy et al, 2017). The researcher and the teacher both recorded their notes for student and teacher turns and the corresponding codes in a researcher-prepared worksheet (that is, Discourse Reflection Inventory for Teachers; Murphy & Firetto, 2018). During the coaching session, the researcher and the teacher reviewed their codes while listening to the coded discussion together.

It is worth noting that additional feedback sessions with teacher and students were included in the current intervention, which are often not present in our projects implemented in the United States. Indeed, when multiple groups

were having QT discussions at the same time, it was impossible for one teacher to attend to each group and know how each discussion went. Therefore, each discussion was audio-recorded for review after class. To ensure students treated the discussion as part of the formal class without the teacher's presence in their group, the teacher emphasised to the students that she and the researcher would listen to all their recordings. After each discussion was completed, the researcher listened to the discussions and took notes for each discussion group pertaining to the performance of the discussion leader and other group members, as well as exemplars of student discourse that represented desirable discourse elements. The researcher then shared the notes for each discussion group with the teacher and the teacher shared her observation in one discussion group that she facilitated. Finally, the researcher and teacher discussed the best practices to facilitate future QT discussions based on the observation and recording of the QT discussions.

Delivery of QT mini-lessons

The lesson slides for QT mini-lessons were modified to be bilingual so that students with varied English language proficiency could understand the definition of each discourse element. Indeed, it is important for students to learn about discourse elements that proximally indicate high-level comprehension so as to conduct high-quality discussions. For English language learners, it was crucial that they understand the definition and differences between question types to be able to generate their own questions accurately. Therefore, to remove any possible language barrier for such understanding, slides with the definitions of each discourse element (for instance, authentic question, test question or connection question) were translated from English into Chinese. The examples for each question type and question starters designed to facilitate formulation of questions were presented in both English and Chinese as needed so that students could refer to the examples and scaffolds when formulating their own questions in English. Accordingly, when the teacher delivered the QT mini-lesson, she explained the definition of the question type in Chinese and introduced the examples and question starters in English. A sample slide can be seen in Figure 6.1.

Throughout the 10-week intervention, QT mini-lessons on question types and argumentation were regularly introduced to the students as a whole class. Occasionally, the teacher would incorporate the student-initiated discourse shared during on-going feedback sessions as examples in the mini-lesson instruction. This way, students could feel more engaged with the explicit instruction and also develop a better understanding of the question types. For example, before the connection questions were introduced, one student already generated several connection questions by connecting the character in the discussed text to sports stars or musicians in a recorded QT discussion (for example, on a story about the football player Pelé). This example was brought up in the QT mini-lesson on connection questions. This way, students had the prior knowledge about the

Figure 6.1: QT mini-lesson definition slide for speculation question

context and text from which the question was generated, thereby making it easier for them to master the definition of connection questions.

Selection of discussed text

To optimise the use of existing materials, texts selected for discussion were mainly extracted from students' textbook, workbook and teacher-provided materials, which aligned with the national standard for the English curriculum. The purpose of selecting such texts within the current curriculum was to develop an instructional approach that reduced teacher burden, aligned with the national standard with appropriate difficulty level for students, and was sustainable over time. More importantly, using these texts for discussion allowed the teacher to dig deeper into the existing materials and optimise their use. Indeed, when the researcher helped the teacher prepare for lessons with a QT discussion, they worked together to figure out possible ways to help students delve into the content in the text, across texts, and make possible connections to lessons or knowledge learned.

For instance, one of the discussed texts from the textbook was about the Lao She Teahouse. The passage was an introduction to the historic Lao She Teahouse in Beijing, where people come to enjoy folk art like Beijing Opera, drink tea and eat

local food. The text consisted of a series of expository paragraphs that described the teahouse and what people often did in the teahouse. To provide a richer text and content for students to conduct QT discussions, the teacher incorporated visitor reviews of the Lao She Teahouse from the handout exercises distributed to the whole grade. Thus, students could discuss the materials from the handout exercises in combination with the textbook during their discussion. In essence, the researcher worked with the teacher to make sure that all the existing materials were utilised effectively, without introducing too much additional information or work for the teacher or students, and to ensure that students could obtain high-level comprehension with the materials at hand. This principle was also applied in designing pre-discussion and post-discussion activities to prepare students for a productive discussion, as well as to promote transfer effects from oral discourse to written discourse.

Pre-discussion and post-discussion activities

Considering students' English proficiency, we designed pre-discussion activities such as reading checks and warm-up activities to prepare students for the discussion. After the discussion, students completed writing tasks to consolidate their thinking by transferring from oral discourse to written discourse. Specifically, in the exemplar study, the teacher administered a quick reading check at the beginning of the class to make sure all students in the class had a basic comprehension of the text. The teacher put up a few overarching questions on the slides and went through the questions with the whole class, making sure that students acquired a basic comprehension of the text to be discussed. Subsequently, the teacher incorporated a warm-up pre-discussion activity to activate the students' prior knowledge and engage them with the materials to be discussed. Often, the teacher included a brief video in English with bilingual subtitles or animation pictures that were related to the text to gear up the discussion. Although QT generally includes some form of pre-discussion activity, these exercises were particularly germane to the multilingual setting.

For example, prior to a QT discussion about Western literature and *Harry Potter*, the teacher showed a brief video that documented how JK Rowling became a professional writer to help students derive more authentic questions and responses in relation to other texts. Another case in point was when students were to discuss a story about a chimpanzee named Nim Chimpsky, their teacher showed them a very short documentary video about the life of Nim, which was closely associated with the text. These warm-up activities helped enrich the text or content that students were about to discuss. The visual representations and motion pictures also helped less proficient students to understand the content to be discussed, aroused students' interest and kept them focused on the content. Indeed, well-designed, warm-up pre-discussion activities can set the stage for a high-quality discussion of the text and propel a more in-depth discussion of the seemingly dry text.

Post-discussion activities are also important in terms of promoting learning, specifically transferring the comprehension and thinking acquired during the discussion into other skills, such as written argumentation. In the present study, students spent about 10 minutes responding to an argumentative writing prompt related to the discussed text in English.

Quality Talk small-group discussions

Given the relatively large classes and a different cultural context compared to the United States, we assigned student discussion leaders and implemented QT discussions in both Chinese and English during the intervention. During each QT discussion, the teacher sat with only one discussion group that required more facilitation and procedural support. A primary reason was that the large class sizes necessitated that all of the small-group discussions had to take place simultaneously (see Figure 6.2 for the set-up of a QT discussion class). It was therefore impossible for every group to have a teacher-facilitated discussion given the limited time for each class and the inflexibility of the school schedule. To ensure that each discussion was facilitated, the teacher selected a more capable other in the group, taking into account the student's English language proficiency and leadership skills, as well as their personal relationships with other group members.

To prepare discussion leaders for effective discussion management, periodic group and individual feedback were provided to the discussion leaders through after-class meetings or teacher modelling in the group. A group feedback session was held after the second QT discussion. During the feedback session, discussion group leaders shared their observations and reflections on serving as the leader of the group. Discussion leaders also shared strategies in terms of motivating group members to provide elaborated explanations. Based on what was addressed by the discussion leaders, the teacher and the researcher provided suggestions, such as discourse moves, as a summative feedback.

Formative feedback was also provided through explicit teacher modelling. For example, in one discussion group, the teacher prompted students for information from the text. Then the teacher said that the discussion leaders could also prompt group members by asking similar questions. Occasionally, the feedback was specific to one discussion group and one discussion leader. For example, one discussion leader struggled with the use of question prompts such as *Why do you think that? How do you know that?* Instead of asking these questions to prompt for reason or evidence from the group members, the discussion leader tended to ask for why the group member wanted to raise a particular question. To address this, individual feedback was provided to this discussion leader to help her understand how to use those prompts more effectively in the discussion group.

In terms of language, QT discussions were conducted in two languages — Chinese QT discussion and English QT discussion took place alternately. All the discussions, regardless of the language used, were about texts written in English.
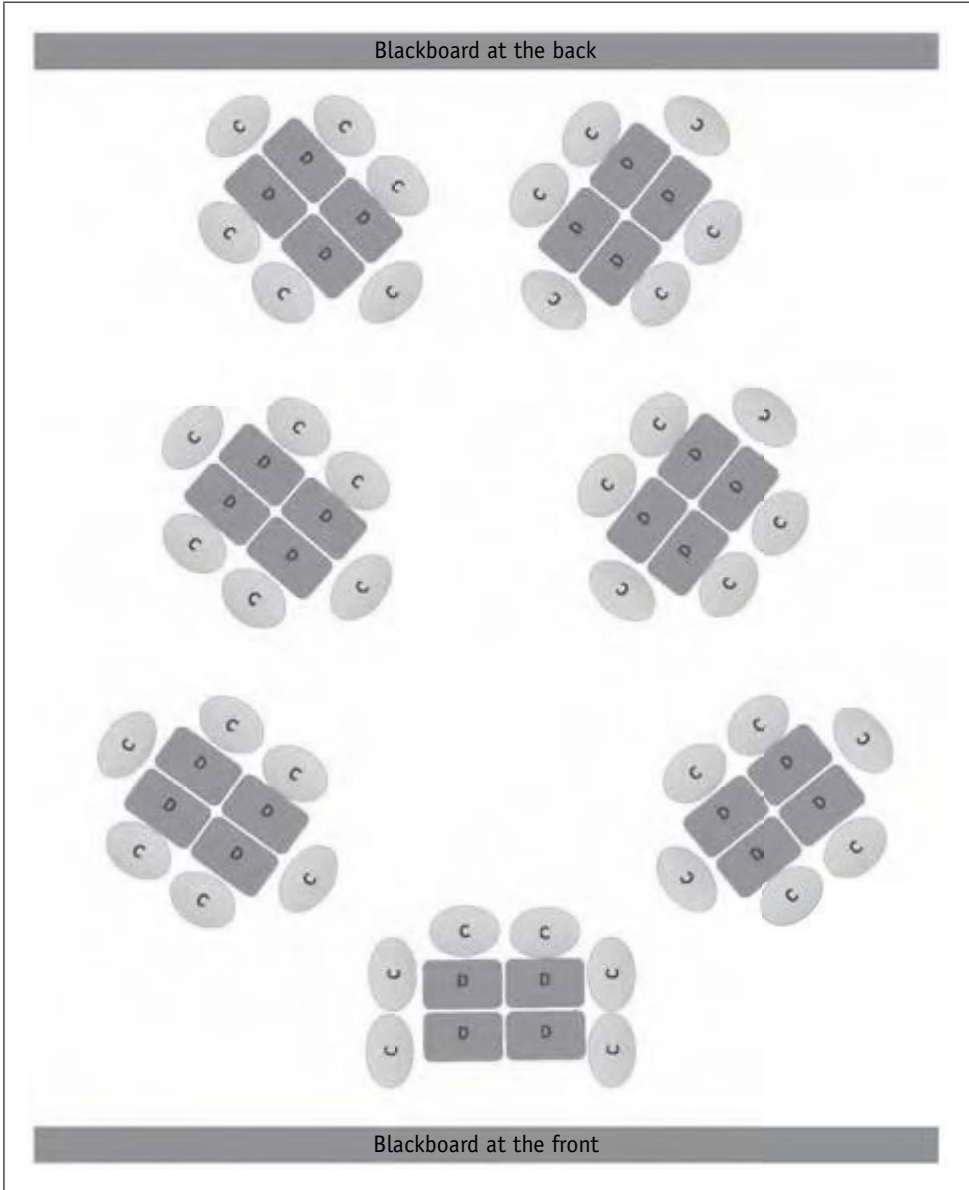
Figure 6.2: Set-up of a QT discussion classroom
Note: C = Chair; D = Desk
Source: The authors

As stressed previously, cultural context is essential for recontextualisation of the intervention. In a culture rooted in Confucianism, Chinese students often regard the teacher as the sole authority of knowledge and are not used to taking on interpretive authority. They are also not familiar with the format of small-group discussion as

an integral part of daily, formal instruction. Therefore, students could familiarise themselves with the format of small-group discussions using Chinese QT discussions and strengthen their practice of oral English using English QT discussions. This was particularly helpful for low-proficient students who found it challenging to conduct a discussion using only English throughout. In Chinese QT discussions, students who were low in English proficiency were able to engage in the discussion with other members in Chinese. Gradually, as they became more familiar with the format of small-group discussion and the climate in their discussion group, students were able to engage more in English. They asked other group members for help and modelled their English on that of their peers to generate utterances on their own.

Selected findings

To explore the effectiveness of the recontextualised QT approach, we conducted a rich analysis of students' English language and the nature of the interactions during discussion. Three major trends have been identified from the type of discourse exhibited during QT discussions. For each trend, we present illustrative examples from the discourse collected from the exemplar study.

The first trend is that English language learners had increased opportunities to engage in English conversations. Through such engagement, English language learners began to take on increasing interpretative authority about, around and with English texts than students in a whole-class lecture setting. As can be seen in Figure 6.3, in a whole-class lecture about 'My hometown' prior to QT intervention, the teacher followed the traditional IRE (that is, initiate–response–evaluate) pattern where she *initiated* a question to the whole class, asked for student *response* and then *evaluated* student response. The teacher also occupied most of the classroom talk by taking more turns with an extended length of time. However, in the example of a QT discussion (that is, second English QT discussion during the intervention) about transportation, as illustrated in Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.5, one group of six students with heterogenous English proficiency were able to take on interpretative authority by asking their own authentic questions (for example, *Could they avoid traffic jam by using higher technology?*), uptake questions (such as *Why?*), and took turns to respond to each other's questions and responses with reasons or evidence. As such a trend is prevalent among English-speaking students discussing in small-groups in their mother tongue (Murphy et al, 2017; Murphy et al. 2018), this finding may indicate that English language learners in a different cultural context—China—are also able to take on interpretative authority and, importantly, in a foreign language.

The second trend is that English language learners were able to engage as emergent leaders in small groups by using forms of *teacher moves* (Wei et al, 2019). As shown in figures 6.4 and 6.5, Jason was able to lead the discussion by using procedural questions (for instance, *Okay. Now another question …*), marking (such as *Very good!*) and prompting (for example, *Why do you know that?*) as

needed during the discussion. This may indicate that even without the teacher being present, students were capable of facilitator roles during the discussion, serving as the student leader to facilitate productive discussions. This is critical to implementing small-group discussions in large classes. Indeed, with a large class size, it is almost impossible to conduct teacher-facilitated discussion for each group within one class period. Given that students can engage in small-group discussions as leaders, students in large classes are afforded the opportunity to conduct high-quality small-group discussions.

The last trend was that English language learners engaged in both learning the language and the construction of knowledge during a QT discussion. In a multilingual context where English language learners were encouraged to discuss

Turn	Speaker	Transcribed Talk
		Text: *My Hometown*
1.	Teacher	... My question is "Do you think the writer loves his hometown and country, why or why not?" ... Do you think the writer loves his hometown? The writer Tony. ... This is his Hometown. Tony wrote the passage. Do you think Tony loves his hometown? How do you know that? Why or why not? Three points to those who want to share the ideas... Do you want to exchange ideas with others? OK. Go ahead.
		[Students read the text and talked with their classmates]
2.	Teacher	Okay. Now let's share your ideas about this. Any volunteers? Three points to your class performance. Jackie, you can choose both Chinese and English. All English or all Chinese or both.
3.	Jackie	Tony said he comes from Cambridge, a beautiful city in the east of England. I think he loves his hometown.
4.	Teacher	Why?
5.	Jackie	Because he said this city is beautiful.
6.	Teacher	Beautiful.
7.	Jackie	If he didn't, if he don't love his hometown, he would not say that.
8.	Teacher	He will use another word. Give me an example. ...
9.	Whole Class	Ugly [student laughing].

Figure 6.3: Episode of a whole-class lecture about 'My hometown'
Source: The authors

Text: *My Best Way of Going to School*

Turn	Speaker	Transcribed Talk
1.	Jason	My authentic question is "Could they avoid traffic jams by using higher technology?"
2.	Mike	I think it's NO. Maybe there will be traffic jam in the air.
3.	Andy	It's a good idea!
4.	Jason	Okay. Why do you know that?
5.	Mike	Because in the road, there will have lots of traffic jam. And ... so everyone in ... buy the plane in the air. So there will have the traffic jam in the air.
6.	Jason	Okay, now another question.
7.	Mike	My question is ... do you think ... what's that ... Do you know to say *shun jian yi dong shu* (Chinese: 瞬间移动术; English: teleportation) in English?
8.	Jason	Maybe teleportation.
9.	Mike	Do you think shun jian wei yi shu will come true?
10.	Dave	I think it will come true.
11.	Jason	Why?
12.	Dave	Because the fly car will be very fast.
13.	Jason	Andy, please answer the question.
14.	Andy	I think the shun jian wei yi shu didn't will come true because when... this technology comes true, our world will be very busy and some people will use the technology to do something. It didn't good for us.
15.	Jason	Now we know that shun jian wei yi shu is teleportation.
16.	Andy	Teleportation.
17.	Sally	I think if lots of people use shun jian wei yi shu
18.	Andy	Teleportation.
19.	Sally	O, teleportation at the same time, it will be some amazing.
20.	Mike	I think teleportation will come true because maybe in the future, the the people will build like the, like in the transformers ... like transformers ... in the road land in the world, so everyone will come ... go to the everywhere. So I think the tele ... shen me (Chinese: 什么; English: what)?
21.	Andy	Teleportation.
22.	Mike	So I think the teleportation will come true. Then other questions?

Figure 6.4: Episode A of a QT discussion about transportation
Source: The authors

Text: *My Best Way of Going to School*

Turn	Speaker	Transcribed Talk
1.	Sally	I have a question. I see the [movie] named King's Man. They use ... the King's man use car that don't need people too. So Egg used the car. He want to meet his father because his father hurt his mother. But...Harry used the car. He don't...he want to go there. So my question is if someone use the pod car do some bad things ... if you think someone will use pod car do some bad things.
2.	Mike	We didn't know, please speak again.
3.	Jason	Sally says did someone bad people will use the electric car to do some bad things? Who has opinion?
4.	Tom	I think the policemen can use it too. So bad man don't want to use it because policeman can use it too.
5.	Jason	Okay. Very good!
6.	Mike	I think maybe it will come true, but ... but the pod car may be don't use pod car. Because pod car, no driver.
7.	Andy	I will talk about the last question. When the teleportation will come true the people can move to any way in anytime so when a Chinese use the teleportation to the America, there is no... not very safe. And when the American to the China, he or she can also use teleportation, so I think···teleportation will...if the teleportation will come true, but the government will stop it.
8.	Sue	I will show my opinion of the last question. I think in the, in the... this paragraph, we see the teleportation is only used in the traffic. It's not the person who will do somethings. Also like the car we use in the road, so I think it's different to teleportation.
9.	Jason	Yes. I think the teleportation has some limit. It [should] only [be used] in the road, not the people can use teleportation to went to anywhere in any time.
10.	Mike	Then maybe he will use the teleportation go to the bank and take away all the money. Then every country will ...
11.	Jason	Be in trouble.
12.	Mike	Yes, yes, yes.

Figure 6.5: Episode B of a QT discussion about transportation
Source: The authors

in a language other than their mother tongue, two types of talk emerged. Students frequently talked about language and integrated the talk about language with formulating questions and developing arguments in the target language. The illustrative example in Figure 6.4 exhibits learning about the word *teleportation* in English (for example, Turns 15–19) and learning to use *teleportation* as part of a question or argument generated in English (for instance, Turn 20). Indeed, during a QT discussion, students learn new words in a social setting and internalise the use of these in their discussion discourse. Subsequently, 'both learning *about* language and learning to *use* language' (Gibbons, 2006: 107) were integrated within a QT discussion. This may indicate that for English language learners, QT discussions not only allowed them to develop higher comprehension of the ideas conveyed in English text but also provided an opportunity for them to learn about and use new vocabulary in the target language within their small groups.

Conclusion

When English serves as either the goal or means of instruction in a multilingual context, it is important that students are provided with effective instructional approaches to promote their English proficiency. To achieve this, instructional approaches such as small-group discussion intervention, which has been identified as effective for English-speaking students, needs to be recontextualised to best serve the target learners. Such recontextualisation requires that researchers take into account participant, classroom, school and cultural contexts to ensure feasibility and sustainability of the intervention.

In our exploration, Quality Talk, a small-group, text-based discussion approach was recontextualised in an eighth-grade, English language learning classroom in mainland China considering the needs of various contexts. The recontextualisation influenced the professional development, ongoing coaching and feedback sessions, delivery of QT mini-lessons, selection of discussed text, pre- and post-discussion activities, as well as the language used for QT small-group discussions. As evidenced in the discussion discourse, the recontextualisation of QT intervention was promising in that English language learners in the study were able to engage in high-quality discussions by taking on increasing interpretative authority, serving as emergent discussion leaders, learning about English and learning to use English.

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Caring for young children's literacy development in a multilingual context through stories

Melanie Moen, Anienie Veldsman & Hannelie du Preez

Introduction

The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is a challenging international phenomenon and South Africa is no exception when facing these challenges. A drive for mother-tongue education, especially in the early years, has been contested; however, it is often expected of the young child to use an international language, such as English, efficiently across social and educational contexts.

South Africa represents a rich multilingual, multiracial and multicultural society, therefore the typical child citizen is exposed to several language challenges in their environment. Although such a richness in our societal compilation seems progressive, this particular linguistic reality has far-reaching educational, cultural, emotional and psychosocial influences on the young child's holistic development as the LoLT often differs from the child's mother tongue. It has become imperative that schools have mindful and caring teachers to assist and support the young child to acquire and become competent in language.

Language is fundamental for thinking, communication, social relations and ascribing meaning to one's world, even if that differs from one's background and context. Hybridising two respective theories, namely the cultural–historical and the ethic of caring in teaching, enables one to view the holistic development of the child citizen, as an individual, but also one who collaborates using thought, language and tools to interact socially and collectively and come to expression across contexts. Each child is unique and an important member of society, and relevant to their immediate contexts. A multiliteracy approach in the classroom enables teachers and researchers to listen intentionally to children to gain an understanding of their story interests. Drawings and narratives can be used to explore, appreciate and be mindful of their story preferences.

To better understand the complex nature of this phenomenon, a case study was constructed to represent the young child's context and provide a platform to explore language within this unique school setting. At our research site, 90 per cent of the 31 school-going child participants' mother-tongue language was not English, the LoLT of the school. The aim of this research inquiry was to develop an intentional presence and appreciation for children's multilingual and multicultural experiences to provide guidelines and feedback for teachers to enable them to be aware of the complexities and to support and strengthen the teaching and learning of language in the early years. The findings revealed that the children's ability to convey their experiences and opinions using English story choices can strengthen language education and acquisition. Intentional acts of caring and taking an interest in young children's story choices are important to empower teachers to practise mindfulness and increase their commitment to promoting language development and caring societies.

Literature review

Multilingualism within a multicultural society

Language as a medium for thinking and expression is one of the most important influences in the development of a young child's independence, individuality, self-concept and well-being (Van Rhyn, 2018). Language serves as a medium that enables the child citizen to access, function and ascribe meaning to their world (Joubert et al, 2015). The phenomenon of multilingualism and multilingual education has been a scholarly debate for many centuries and thus complicates a universal definition (Lemmer & Meier, 2011). The shared notion is that multilingualism refers to the ability of an individual to come to expression using two or more language contexts without being preoccupied with the level of proficiency. With reference to multiculturalism, the notion of acknowledging, accepting and celebrating diversity among citizens is foregrounded; and, furthermore, no language, race, culture or religion is viewed as superior, which provides a safe place for individuals to preserve their inherent cultural–historical and collective identities (Okal 2014; Gross & Dewaele, 2017). Multilingualism is of crucial importance because it extends the heterogeneous composition of society and welcomes cultural diversity into all social conventions. It also plays an integral part in promoting non-racialism, and promoting an accepting and a cohesive society (De Kock, 2016). Therefore, it can be deduced that multilingualism and multiculturalism are inherently integrated and not easily separated. Although multilingualism is not necessarily promoted in all countries, the fact of the matter is that globalisation is shaping the necessity to adapt to changes in culture and language (McWhorter, 2015).

The reality of implementing a multicultural education approach in a multilingual classroom

In light of the nature and importance of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the South African context, it is also important to consider including this in teaching and learning. Sleeter and Grant (2007) highlight ways to strengthen multicultural education as it is founded on the premise that human relationships bring people closer together (Sleeter & Grant, 2007). Firstly, they emphasise the importance of respect, love and communication. Secondly, they emphasise efforts for social action through human conventions such as language, race and culture. Thirdly, it is important to intentionally instil a cognitive understanding of the value and nature of exceptional and cultural differences within the curriculum as part of school programmes and, fourthly, to celebrate diversity and raise awareness of the uniqueness of diverse cultural, racial and multilingual groups.

When implementing a multicultural approach in a multilingual classroom, these aspirations cannot be considered without understanding the unique context and situatedness of the community, school, teacher and child. Teachers, and especially those teaching young children, require support and guidance to promote their commitment to multiculturalism without creating a volatile situation. However, teachers are constantly challenged by the pressure to reduce the complexity of an individual child's character to seeing that child as part of an homogenous group — making it easier to transfer knowledge and language (Sleeter & Grant, 2007; Waghid 2010; Okal, 2014).

A current crisis facing many teachers is the distinct character and complexity of the composition of the class. Because many teachers cannot necessarily speak multiple languages and are not always trained in inclusive education and professional teaching practices (such as classroom management, pedagogy and mentorship), they struggle to provide adequate stimulation and care for young children (Stach et al, 2018). Classroom situations are also not ideal: often there is a large child–teacher ratio, and classes comprise diverse mother-tongue speakers with unique learning preferences, and other complex cognitive, emotional or physical barriers. These factors are contextualised within a complicated socio-economic environment with dynamic and distinctive family and community units. The reality is that teachers are challenged to prepare young children with the knowledge, skills and values for democratic citizenship within this complex setting (Sleeter & Grant, 2007; Waghid, 2010; Okal, 2014). Therefore, one can understand that teachers, tasked with transforming and inspiring young minds through caring and co-constructing knowledge, can be overwhelmed in this complex environment and by their own confusion regarding the multilingual and multicultural classroom. They are expected to reposition themselves to focus on the demands of achieving the educational outcomes within these complex settings where language and academic achievement are emphasised. However, these multilingual, multicultural settings have far-reaching consequences for the

social, emotional and personal development of the young child, which is often underemphasised. Therefore, teacher preparation programmes and continuous professional development opportunities should prepare and equip teachers for diverse multilingual and multicultural environments without sacrificing the child's emotional and social well-being. In the following section the distinction is made between multilingualism, home language and language of learning and teaching.

Multilingualism, home language (HL) and language of learning and teaching (LoLT)

In light of the complex discussions in the preceding sections, it is important to distinguish between multilingualism, home language (HL) and language of learning and teaching (LoLT), as the language used in a social and academic context is not a 'one-size-fits-all' phenomenon (Weber, 2009). Home language or mother tongue refers to the language to which the child is exposed in utero and could be considered the language the child speaks at home (Joubert et al, 2015). Language has multiple social and educational purposes — it facilitates interaction with others and allows us to ascribe meaning to everyday experiences, ourselves, others and the world around us (Kozulin, 2004; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008). Social language is more natural in nature, easier to acquire and less cognitively demanding (Stach et al, 2018). Social language use is crucial to relationship development and for children to feel loved and cared for. Academic language is also important to instil subject-specific knowledge systems within a structured academic context, which can become more cognitively challenging and sophisticated. The acquisition of both social and academic language is important, as children's 'spontaneous' use of language becomes structured and conscious through the introduction of 'scientific' language, which raises the child's level of thinking and functioning and mediates their development (Kozulin, 2004; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008).

Describing the importance of language acquisition is obvious, however promoting English as a home language or LoLT, even though it is the child's second or additional language, is deemed controversial. Due to aspects such as globalisation, socioscientific issues and the commencement of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, parents are influenced or led to believe that English should be their child's LoLT, despite scholarly evidence promulgating the importance of HL as LoLT in the early years (De Kock, 2016). Increasingly, scholarly studies advocate that the child's HL should be the LoLT as the acquisition of a language that is used for both social and academic purposes lays a solid foundation for thinking, problem-solving and learning (Stach et al, 2018). More than three decades ago, Cummins (1980) stated that children who are not taught in their HL will encounter problems in acquiring an academic language. More recent studies (Joubert et al, 2015) have found that the acquisition of a language that will enable a child to understand and acquire knowledge systems can take between seven and 10 years.

Researchers such as Okal (2014) state that children thrive academically when they are schooled in their home language. In light of this statement and to emphasise the importance of HL as the LoLT, we explored the South African preProgress in International Reading Literacy Study (prePIRLS). Van Staden, Bosker and Bergbauer (2016) disclosed that the children who undertook this national test in an AL (second or third language) scored significantly lower than those who did this same test in English as their HL (Van Staden et al, 2016). The findings revealed that 'African children stand to be disadvantaged the most when a strong mother tongue base has not been developed and when education for children between Grade 1 and 3 is only available through a medium of instruction other than the mother tongue' (Van Staden et al, 2016: 1). It is of crucial importance to prepare young children for a multilingual and multicultural world, but not at the expense of jeopardising their ability to become literate and actualise their potential.

As mentioned earlier, children are not schooled only to acquire knowledge systems but also to become active and democratic citizens (Waghid, 2010; DBE, 2011). Thus, children do benefit from acquiring more than two languages and being guided into becoming open-minded and culturally empathic towards others within their environment and community (Gross & Dewaele, 2017). As stipulated by the South African Schools Act (1996) and the Language in Education Policy (LiEP), parents have the right to enrol their child in a school of their choice. The Department of Basic Education (1997) contends that the underlying principle of the LiEP is to reinforce the home language as the LoLT, especially in the early years (Stach et al, 2018), however this postulation does not reflect the reality facing many children in South Africa. The reality is that the LoLT of the school in which parents enrol their child often differs from their HL or the language used in their extended family and community (Joubert et al, 2015). Young children in South African schools are often schooled in their second or even third language and not their HL (Stach et al, 2018). One can, therefore, say that multilingual and multicultural classes are the present and future reality for South African children and cannot be ignored. One solution to this complex problem is the promotion of a caring school environment that focuses on the holistic well-being of the young child.

The role of a caring other in acquiring HL, identity and sense of belonging

The importance of socialisation at home and within the community significantly impacts a child's predisposition to become multilingual after the foundations of a HL have been established (Stach et al, 2018). Dickson and Porche (2011) postulate that the more supportive the social–cultural environment, the more likely it is that a child will become fluent and competent in his or her HL. Therefore, the role of the significant other in constructing a solid foundation for the construction and

scaffolding of the child's acquisition of HL cannot be emphasised enough (Shiel et al, 2012). Engaging in creative and meaningful opportunities for conversations with children creates crucial moments and learning opportunities for acquiring language, listening and speaking skills. Language acquisition is a sociocultural phenomenon that is dependent on a dialectical environment (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008; Kozulin, 2004). Spontaneous moments such as eye contact, responding caringly and appropriately, telling social-cultural and historical stories, as well as scaffolding opportunities to develop language serve as important building blocks for language acquisition (Le Roux, 2012). Notions of engagement can be enriched further through activities such as drawings and exposure to textual print (for example, newspapers or cereal boxes), which enrich spontaneous and context-bound learning. Stories and literature can be used effectively to improve language acquisition and development in a multilingual classroom setting.

The role of literature and stories in improving language development

Literature can be defined in many ways and our ideas of what constitutes literature have changed culturally and historically. The definition also differs from culture to culture. However, literature has been defined as 'the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language' (Kiefer & Tyson, 2014: 5). Literature begins with the art of storytelling and is transferred and preserved through generations and remains fundamental to all cultures worldwide (Kozulin, 2004; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008). Children learn oral language, gestures and the purpose of communication early in their lives, and they imitate significant and more knowledgeable others such as parents and teachers. For children to become literate, textual and illustrative books and stories must be topical, relevant and relate to the real world to which they are exposed (Evans, Joubert & Meier, 2017). Evans et al (2017) believe that children's books cannot stand apart from their world, as they are sociocultural products with historical and specific contexts. Cultural–historical theorists also agree with this notion.

Reading is considered to be the most important academic skill that a child will ever learn. Reading and narrating stories should be a pleasurable and enjoyable experience for a young child (Joubert et al, 2015). It is imperative that such sociocultural literature is valued in the home and school of the young child because of the enrichment it provides on both personal and educational levels (Kiefer & Tyson, 2014). Therefore, it is important for communities to develop a culture of reading.

In light of this succinct overview, it can be postulated that young children who are intentionally and caringly introduced to literacy-related practices (for instance, storybook, print-rich environments) are most likely to become successful readers (Van Rhyn, 2018).

Theories that strengthen language development within a multilingual classroom

The contemporary needs of democratic societies are to cultivate child citizens who are adaptable, tolerant, ethical, multilingual and literate in a multicultural context (DBE, 2011). There is an interconnectedness or dialectical–interactive presence between the kind of citizen that is envisioned and the social situatedness of the child within a larger context; the acquisition of language utilising spontaneous storytelling and textual and illustrative story books; and a mindful and caring knowledgeable other who is committed to the child's acquisition of language. In light of this postulation, a theoretical framework that strengthens the intended teaching of language to the young child within a context that welcomes dialogues and conversations is suggested — such a theory requires both cultural–historical theory and an ethic for care in teaching premises.

A cultural–historical theory

Cultural–historical theory originated from the ground-breaking work of Russian psychologist LS Vygotsky and his cohorts, Alexander Luria and Alexei Leont'ev (Sannino, Daniels & Gutiérrez, 2009). Vygotsky et al's understanding of how the child learns signposts diverse factors for cultural–historical development, that is, concepts and thinking; culture and context; cultural tools and mediation; spontaneous and scientific language; a more knowledgeable other; play, inquiry and curiosity; and the zone of proximal development, to name a few (Kozulin, 2004; Sannino et al, 2009). Cultural–historical theorists are cognisant of 'how' the young child acquires languages, because language is the vehicle for thought and deepens and transform the child's thinking, emotions, expressions and experience about who he or she is in relation to others within the environment (Kozulin, 2004; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008; Sannino et al, 2009). As elucidated earlier, a young child does not acquire a language merely through exposure; instead they acquire a language because they strive to belong and feel part of a community. Language serves as the means for engaging in a dialectical relationship with a more knowledgeable other as these interactions deepen and transform thought and ascribe meaning.

Cultural–historical theory embraces a holistic perspective of the young child's everyday activities and spontaneity in a social context (Kozulin, 2004; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008). Children can adapt to and function in dynamic situations, which include several environments that can be multilingual, multicultural and sociohistorical in nature (for example, home, school, afterschool activities, extended family or peer-group activities) (Kozulin, 2004; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008). The competency of every child's developmental pathway differs and acquisition of language depends on the variety and quality of his or her exposure to different social situations and knowledgeable others. The development of

the child is, therefore, anchored in the general everyday living conditions at a concrete historical or societal institutional setting (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008). One must guard against assuming that the environment is something 'outside' the child's functioning; rather, the child is interacting, thinking and actively engaging with others and their environment to instigate meaning-making processes for themselves (Yamagata-Lynch, 2007; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008).

Poor social environments with uninvolved parents, community members and teachers do not provide the stimulation necessary to foster language development (Van Rhyn, 2018). Encouraging a child to engage with story books (through viewing, listening, retelling stories and predicting) is crucial for the development of social, cognitive, emotional and linguistic skills during the emergent literacy stage (Lenyai, 2011). Therefore, it is important to note that learning experiences should take place under the mindful and caring demeanour of a more knowledgeable other, like a teacher, which is discussed further in the following section on ethics of care in teaching.

Ethics of care in teaching

Caring should be at the heart of the educational system (Nodding, 2010). Adopting a 'motherly' demeanour of being caring, present and mindful when interacting with the child is the premise that underlies this theory (Owens & Ennis, 2005; Nodding, 2010). To institute the reciprocal ethic of care relationship between the caring teacher and the young child involves engrossment, commitment and a motivational shift toward the well-being of the young child (Owens & Ennis, 2005). Engrossment means that the teacher establishes a caring relationship by being cognisant of the young child's feelings, thinking and the relevance of their experiences (Owens & Ennis, 2005; Nodding, 2010). Commitment to caring for the young child takes precedence in their teaching and needs persistence to involve, understand, include and accept the child's feelings, thoughts and experience (Owens & Ennis 2005; Nodding 2010). Finally, the focus on the self as teacher is shifted towards that of the young child and to being mindful and empathetic to how the young child experiences their social and cultural environments within various societal situations (Owens & Ennis 2005; Nodding 2010).

The above-mentioned theoretical framework clearly pleads for a mindful and caring teacher who is cognisant of the child's cultural–historical embedded thinking, experience and understanding of the social situation, and the use of language and linguistic resources to assist the child to come to expression and acquire language for communication and thinking. However, the reality is not as straightforward and favourable. The South African child citizen is exposed to cultural–historical contexts that do not always convey care and commitment. Poor literacy skills in the early years are exacerbated by factors such as socio-economic and financial constraints.

In an effort to understand the intensity of this reality, a research endeavour was conducted using a multiliteracy approach and techniques. The aim was to provide a practical research methodology that could be used by teachers and researchers in diverse language and cultural contexts. We shall discuss the use of drawings and narratives as research methods in multicultural and multilingual settings, then present the case study to demonstrate these methods.

Methodology

Drawings as research methodology

Children come to school from many different linguistic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In order for teachers to support children, they need to understand children's multifaceted ways of representing knowledge (Kendrick & McKay, 2004). In recent years, there has been a shift towards an interest in children's meaning-making through their drawings and the sociocultural contexts of their drawing activities (Hall, 2010). Hall (2010) is of the opinion that drawing is a cultural resource, involving fantasy, reality and innovation. To children, drawing is a spontaneous activity that allows them to escape from reality (Hawkins, 2002). Researchers such as Hall (2010) and Steele and Kuban (2013) postulate that drawings may present a safe vehicle for children to express what speech alone cannot express. Furthermore, most children experience drawing as a spontaneous activity that allows expression of desires as well as fears (Hawkins, 2002). Through drawing, children are given an opportunity to express their inner feelings, without causing harm (Van Niekerk, 1990). Drawing pictures improves a child's ability to express him- or herself (Oguz, 2010). Farokhi and Hashemi (2011) also note that drawing is culture-friendly and globally regarded as a form of self-expression.

As mentioned earlier, drawings can be used as a way to understand a child's background, culture, inner feelings and fantasies. Therefore, teachers and researchers can use this methodology as a way to understand diverse topics that need further investigation.

Narratives as research method

Narrative research is often used in the social sciences. It is a form of research in which linguistic data are central to the work (Maree, 2016). Narrative research is the study of how human beings experience the world and describes human beings as producers and transmitters of reality (Cresswell, 2013). People lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives. 'A narrative researcher collects these stories that describe these lives, then analyses and retells the stories in terms of a narrative experience' (Maree, 2016: 76). Narratives are extensively used with children and adults as a mode of inquiry in qualitative research. The specific focus is on the stories told by individuals (Creswell, 2013). It is important to note that stories can never be understood in isolation; one should always understand the individual

within a specific context. By combining drawings and narratives, one can identify and form a rich understanding of a child's specific interaction with a given topic.

In the following section, a typical case study will be set out. The case study was conducted in an urban setting in South Africa in a multicultural and multilingual classroom setting. The emphasis is on how teachers and researchers can approach a diverse linguistic setting to inform a caring and stimulating environment for young children from diverse backgrounds. Ultimately, the case study demonstrates how a practical research methodology and inclusive theoretical outlook can assist in improving language and the holistic development of children in general.

Case study: Star Primary School

Star Primary School is a state-funded primary school in one of South Africa's capital cities. The school has 1 150 children from ages 4 to 11 years. More or less 50 per cent of the children are from foreign countries and for the majority of these, English is a second or third language. The school is situated in a lower socio-economic area within the inner city and is surrounded by apartment buildings and shops. Many of the children in Star Primary live in apartments.

Mrs Mabe, who has more than 20 years' teaching experience, is one of the Grade 1 teachers at Star Primary School. She has 31 children in her class, more than 90 per cent of whom speak English as a second or third language. At the beginning of the year she read a scientific paper on young children and caring relationships. The article stated that children who are nurtured and cared for display more advanced brain development. After reading this article she was inspired to make a difference in the lives of the children in her class. In the past, the children had struggled to cope with English as a medium of instruction and this had affected them scholastically, as well as emotionally. She decided to find out more about the backgrounds of the children in her class, hoping to improve their well-being in general. Seeing that most of the children came from foreign countries, she felt that language was an area on which she needed to focus. She also had a great love for stories and reading, and felt that language might be the key to providing a nurturing environment for her pupils. Mrs Mabe had a long-standing relationship with the University of Pretoria. In the past, she had assisted with university research projects at her school and her class is also involved with a reading initiative organised by the university. She asked the university to assist her with the research project as she felt that the information would enhance her understanding of the children's diverse language and emotional needs.

One morning with the help of researchers at the university, she started the day by asking her class to draw a picture of their favourite story, after which they had to write one or two sentences on their reasons for choosing that particular story. After collecting the drawings, the researchers and teacher interviewed each child. Each child had to tell them why they chose to draw a particular story, what kind of books they preferred and why they enjoyed these books. Each child was also asked

about their families, who read to them at home and if they ever visited the library. Through the drawings, interviews, observations and narratives of the children, Mrs Mabe and the researchers gained valuable insights. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The drawings, observations, interviews and narratives were analysed through content analysis to identify prominent themes. Content analysis is often used to determine meaning from pictures, words, themes or any message that is communicated (Mouton, 2016).

Through this informal research project, the researchers and Mrs Mabe developed a deeper understanding of the children's home environments and the types of challenges they faced on a daily basis. A number of children in her class mentioned some of the adversities they faced on a daily basis. Some came from single-headed households, while others experienced divorce, and poverty was also a limiting factor in many households.

When the researchers asked about reading behaviour, they discovered that most of the children read to themselves at home. Their parents rarely read to them and they seldom saw their parents read at all. One thing Mrs Mabe noticed was that almost half of her class did not visit the public library in their community. A significant number of children drew pictures of stories that they had seen on television and not stories that they had actually read themselves. Mrs Mabe and the researchers also noted that the children enjoyed fairy tales and stories that involved fantasy and humour. A few of the children's responses are described below.

Amy, a 7-year-old girl, drew and wrote the following: 'I love *Cinderella* because she taught us not to be ashamed of yourself.' The enjoyment of reading and listening to fairy tales was an important theme in the study.

Thato, a 6-year-old boy, who drew and wrote about a fantasy book, *The fox and the grapes*, said he enjoyed the humour in the book. When Mrs Mabe interviewed Thato, he said the following about the book: 'The book is funny …' Books that included fantasy and humour were often mentioned by the children, when asked about their favourite stories.

Emi, a 7-year-old girl, told Mrs Mabe she enjoyed the book, *The old lady who swallowed a fly*, as it was a funny and nice story.

Phinde, a 6-year-old girl, enjoyed the story of *Cinderella* as she thought she wore a beautiful dress in the book. This story is a fairy tale, which includes several fantasy elements.

Patty, a 6-year-old girl, drew and told Mrs Mabe about the story *Sophia the first*. She enjoyed the fact that Sophia had many possessions, and that she was kind and forgiving.

Picture 1: Amy
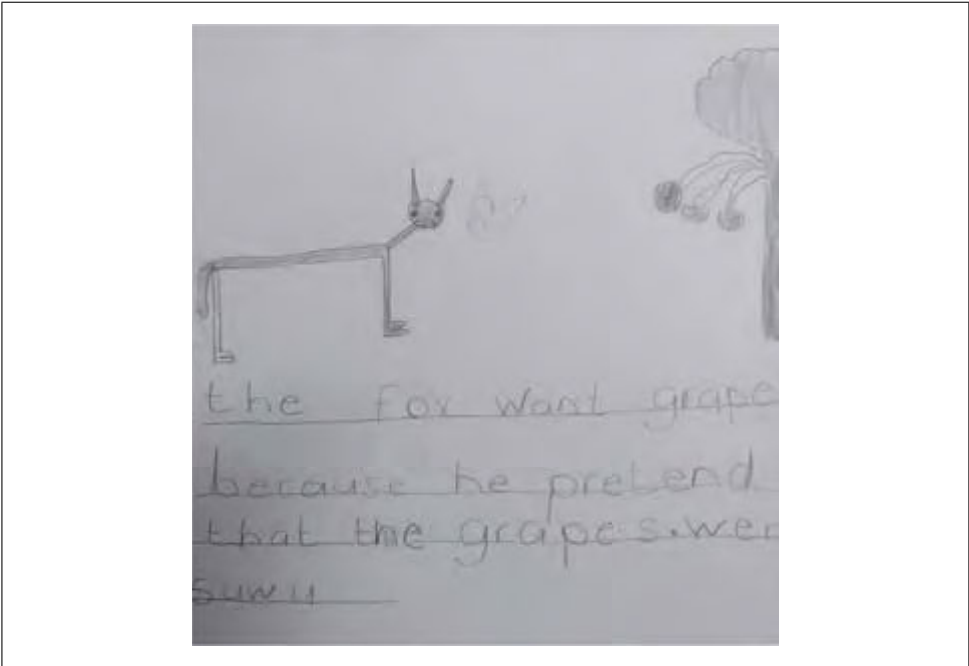
Picture 2: Thato

Picture 3: Patty

Bettie, a 7-year-old girl, also enjoyed this particular book because Sophia was described as a 'good girl'.

Themba, a 7-year-old boy, mentioned to his teacher that he loved to read *The three bears*, which is a fairy tale, with fantasy elements such as talking bears. He described the book as fun — a story that teaches us to be friends.

After the informal research project, Mrs Mabe decided to adjust her reading list for the rest of the year. She included more books relating to humour, fantasy and fairy tales. She also decided to extend her stories to her Life Skills subject. She started to write her own stories that related to the types of adversities her class faced. She asked the children in her class to tell stories about their culture and cultural practices. She also used an open source website to design and print her own stories for her class. Storytelling and caring books are now included in her language and Life Skills subjects.

She also compiled an information leaflet for parents. The leaflet gives practical guidelines to parents on how to select appropriate books for their children and how to read to a young child. She also encouraged the parents to read to their children and visit the public library. She organised a parental meeting to introduce practical

guidelines for parents on language development and reading at home, as well as on how to improve a child's psychological well-being.

The following section provides practical recommendations that can be used to support learning in a multilingual, multicultural classroom.

Supporting learning in a multilingual classroom

The basis for literacy lies in providing the young child with essential and sufficient language-nurturing and a caring environment (Van Rhyn, 2018). The cultural–historical and ethic of care contexts for spontaneously and formally acquiring language have an important influence on the future literacy skills of the young child. The recommendations and practical interventions are intended to support teachers as this caregiving situation becomes a crucial sub-environment for children's language acquisition. Some meaningful activities for enhancing multilingualism are given. Some of the initiatives that have been introduced to assist teachers to care for children in a multilingual and multicultural classroom are worth noting. These activities serve as an impetus for teachers on how they can accommodate children to actualise their potential in a holistic manner.

One teaching–learning strategy that has had much success in developing reading and acquiring knowledge and skills is the notion behind collaborative learning (Evertson & Emmer, 2012); especially the works of Slavin (1996) on the 'Every Child, Every School: Success for All' reading programme. It is postulated that children who learn together, achieve together. Slavin's (1996) Success for All Foundation programmes (http://www.successforall.org/) are based on co-operative learning strategies that enable the child to fulfil his or her potential while reaping enjoyment from social interaction with peers.

Stories and folk tales play a vital role in uniting people from different cultures, and members of the community, especially elderly citizens, parents, vocational workers and role-models can become a valuable asset to preserve cultural–historical artefacts. Children are provided with the opportunity to work collectively with other children to co-construct meaning about me, you and world through engaging in LoLT. Some of these learning opportunities can include sharing information about their social–cultural background, conversing about favourite stories and learning about one another's uniqueness and cultural conventions. Through these activities and dialogue, engagement opportunities are created and children can explore language and learning in a 'safe space'. Teachers should celebrate and promote co-operation above competition and should praise and acknowledge children's intentional attempts to use LoLT as a language for expression.

Using role-models from the community as a teaching approach not only appeals to the social learning preferences of a young child but also supports teachers in reaching out to virtual and physical communities to enrich literacy-learning experiences. The Reading, Rugby and Responsibility project is an example

of a community project that was aimed to improve how rugby players, as role-models, can intentionally inculcate responsible social and reading behaviour in young children (Masola, 2017). In this project, rugby players visited primary schools on a weekly basis to read and interact with young children.

The African Storybook (ASb) is an initiative designed by the South African Institute of Distance Education (Saide) and is dedicated to addressing the scarcity in rich and appropriate cultural–historical books for early reading in various African languages (www.africanstorybook.org).

The effect of a supportive and caring demeanour of a teacher is crucial for language acquisition. The engrossed, committed and mindful involvement of the caring teacher or knowledgeable other is optimised through using interactive story book reading opportunities. A South African researcher, Van Rhyn (2018), implemented an interactive story book reading intervention which draws on all the underlying principles of language but is also enjoyable for the young child. The importance of dramatising and using body language, gestures, adapting one's voice for mimicry, facial expressions and the teacher's enthusiasm for the reading process is emphasised in her intervention.

As demonstrated in the case study, drawings and narratives can also be used to strengthen the link between language development, academic knowledge and the broader community. The multilingual, multicultural school environment necessitates innovative and adaptive approaches to effectively improve the holistic well-being of the young child. Therefore, the teacher who is invested in a caring relationship with each child will be sensitive to the child's academic and emotional needs, which ultimately can improve the holistic well-being of the child.

Conclusion

Although mother-tongue education is suggested for the first few years of schooling, it is a well-known fact that a large number of children do not receive their schooling in their home language. The reasons vary and can be attributed to issues such as immigrant children, ineffective schooling systems and parents who prefer to place their children in English-medium schools, as English is often presented as the language of choice for optimal educational opportunities (Van Rhyn, 2018).

However, the literacy levels of English Second Language learners in South Africa are well below the desired performance levels (Krugel & Fourie, 2014). Poor literacy skills have an impact not only on a child's scholastic progress and identity, but also on their general well-being. Stakeholders such as parents, teachers and policy-makers should realise the importance of schooling that is appropriate for the context to ultimately impact on an individual's holistic well-being. Therefore, we argue that language and language development in the young child can only be understood and improved if we take into account the broader context in which role-players function. Therefore, creating caring environments and combining these with innovative research and classroom practices are suggested.

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Problematising monolingual practices in multilingual classrooms in Lusaka: Towards more inclusive teaching and learning

David Sani Mwanza & Peter Chomba Manchishi

Introduction

There are different definitions of literacy. In this chapter, literacy is generally understood to be the ability to read and write in either an ordinary alphabet or in Braille. Since literacy is linked to the skills of reading and writing, literacy teaching and learning requires that it should be carried out in a language. It is not possible, therefore, to talk about literacy without talking about language because language constitutes the medium through which literacy is developed (Simwinga, 2006: 1). The language of instruction in literacy teaching and learning is guided by a language in education policy. Trask (1997) defines a language in education policy as an official government policy that regulates the form, teaching or use of one or more languages within the area controlled by that government. Zambia has not had a consistent language in education policy. The changes made to the policy, especially in the language of initial literacy teaching, have been done in search of a better policy that would enhance literacy levels in Zambia.

It can be argued that literacy (reading and writing) started with the missionaries who settled in various parts of the country where they set up churches, hospitals and schools. They used local languages to enhance their mission of evangelism, and to teach reading, writing and numeracy. In schools, the local language was the language of classroom instruction up to the fourth grade (Manchishi, 2004). This was effective as it connected the home to the school and it was easier for the learners to learn from the known to the unknown.

By the time Northern Rhodesia became a British protectorate in 1924, the British Colonial Office in London had set up an Advisory Committee on Education to examine the educational system in its colonies and advise on how it could be improved. At the time, the Second African Education Commission under the

auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the International Education Board was visiting East and Central Africa.

In the Phelps-Stokes Report (1924), the commission recommended that English become the official language in education and government business while local languages were to be used for the preservation of national values and self-identity on the part of the Africans (Manchishi, 2004). As a result of the recommendations made by the African Education Commission, the government went further and formally recognised four main local languages — Cibemba, Cinyanja, Citonga and Silozi — as regional official languages to be used in the African government schools as media of instruction for the first four years of primary education. By 1953, there was a three-tier language policy for the territory, guided by the principle of complementarity. As a result, students were taught in the mother tongue for the first two years of primary education. Thereafter, pupils were taught in the dominant regional official language for another two years and then in English from the fifth year onwards (Kashoki, 1978: 26; Chanda, 1998: 63). It is important to note that although there were policy changes in 1977, 1992 and 1996, English continued to be the dominant language of instruction while local languages continued to play second fiddle.

By 2014, the policy was revised and the major change was the extension of the use of local languages to the first four years of schooling. Thus, the current language in education policy recommends Zambian regional official languages be used as languages of instruction for the first four years then English takes over as the sole medium of instruction across subjects from Grade 5 to university.

Although there have been several changes or revisions to the policy, literacy levels have not improved significantly in Zambia. For example, by 1998, the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) study on reading performance levels of Grade 6 pupils in the Zambian Basic schools revealed that in 1995, out of the 148 Grade 6 pupils in the target population, only 25 per cent were able to read at defined maximum levels and only 3 per cent were able to read at desired levels (Nkamba & Kanyika, 1998). From these statistics, it is clear that there was no improvement despite constant policy revision. In 2002, the Zambia Demographic and Health Survey conducted a study to assess reading abilities of children aged between 7 and 10 years. The findings showed that only 19 per cent of the children could read some or all of the sentences. In 2005, Matafwali also conducted a study in Lusaka which revealed that Grade 3 learners could not read and write at desirable levels and there was no difference in the abilities of rural and urban learners. In 2012, Mulenga also conducted a study in the Copperbelt to investigate pupils' readiness for the Read On Course. Grade 3 pupils were assessed in reading. The results showed that the majority of the pupils (63 per cent) could not read at desirable levels. What we see in these studies is confirmation of the observation that, despite several attempts to alter the language in education policy, literacy levels have remained significantly low. The big question is: why? We provide the answer later.

Banda and Mwanza (2017) argued that Zambia is a multilingual country and almost all classrooms are multilingual and multi-ethnic. Thus, they argue that multilingual classrooms require multilingual language practices and this has not been the case in Zambia. Zambia follows a transitional bilingual education system, which Cummins (2009: 161) describes as follows:

> *Transitional bilingual education aims only to promote students' proficiency in English. When it is assumed that students have attained sufficient proficiency in the school language to follow instruction in the language, home language instruction is discontinued and students are transitioned into mainstream classes taught exclusively in English.*

From this quote, it can be argued that the exclusive use of one language after the other means that transitional bilingual education policy is premised on monolingual language ideologies and practices. The use of regional languages in the first four years is seen here as preparatory for the medium of English. The problem here is the use and deployment of monolingual practices in multilingual classes. Closely connected to this problem is assigning one language to a particular region on the assumption that there is, or there can be, a single language that is familiar to everyone in a particular province. Based on language zoning in Zambia, Cinyanja is the language of initial literacy teaching for Eastern and Lusaka provinces, Cibemba is for Muchinga, Northern, Luapula and Copperbelt provinces, Silozi is for Western Province, Citonga is for Southern Province while Cilunda, Kikaonde and Ciluvale are for North-Western Province. Language zoning assumes, for example, that Cinyanja is the familiar language to everyone in Eastern and Lusaka provinces, despite the fact that places like Lusaka and Chipata are cosmopolitan. In this view, this phenomenon neglects the linguistic diversity inherent in these respective provinces. The misrecognition of the regional standard language as the legitimate language of initial literacy in multilingual contexts of Zambia is implicated in a number of studies reviewed later, which have clearly shown that language zoning, as well as monolingual practices in multilingual classrooms and regions, are problematic and a hindrance to literacy teaching and learning.

Problems associated with monolingual/monoglot language practices in multilingual classrooms

Mulenga (2012) conducted a study in which he wanted to establish Grade 3 pupils' preparedness to read and write in Cibemba and English. Most pupils in Grade 3 were unable to read and write at the desirable level. These included those who were judged to have broken through to literacy at the end of Grade 2. The pupils could not spell both English and Cibemba words, especially when they were asked to read words which had more than one syllable. Pupils failed to read words and sentences that were deemed to be at their reading level. Although it was expected that pupils

could transfer their literacy abilities from Cibemba to English, the conclusion was that, in fact, pupils had little or nothing at all to transfer from Cibemba as a first language to English as a second language by Grade 3.

Mwambazi (2011) set out to establish the factors and the nature of low reading achievement among Grade 2 pupils in selected schools in Mpika and Mbala districts. The findings showed that Grade 2 pupils were not able to read Zambian languages and English according to their grade level. Absenteeism, shortage of suitable teaching and learning materials, shortage of teachers who were trained in Primary Reading Programme (PRP) methodologies, large classes and a language of instruction unfamiliar to both teachers and pupils, all accounted for the low reading achievement (see also Banda & Mwanza, 2017).

Phiri (2012) studied teachers' perceptions of factors that prevented some Grade 1 learners from acquiring the skills of reading and writing. The language of instruction unfamiliar to both teachers and pupils was found to be the major reason why pupils failed to break through to literacy. The challenge associated with the language of instruction was more pronounced in urban and in peri-urban schools because of the factor of multilingualism, which made it impracticable to use a regional standard language (Kikaonde) as the medium of instruction in the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) programme. The situation was different in rural schools where language did not pose a threat to the learners because the language of instruction was also the regional ethnic language.

Kumwenda (2011) conducted a study to establish the initial reading performance in Cinyanja in multi-ethnic/multilingual Chipata urban areas. This was a comparative study of the reading performance between pupils for whom Cinyanja — the regional language of education — was not their first language and those who spoke Cinyanja as their first language. As expected, the results showed that pupils who had Cinyanja as their first language performed better than those who did not have Cinyanja as their first language.

Matafwali (2010) noted that, despite the introduction of a regional official language as the medium of instruction in 2000, children in Lusaka could still not read and write at a desirable level. It is important to state that Lusaka is more multilingual than Chipata, the research site of Kumwenda's (2011) study. Cinyanja is the designated regional official language of education and local administration, and the literature frames it as the 'mother tongue', 'language of play' and familiar language to school going children in Lusaka. This is misleading since there are so many languages spoken in Lusaka. In fact, Banda and Mwanza (2017) clearly state that 'the Cinyanja used for academic purposes is not exactly the same as the one spoken by the majority of pupils in Lusaka'. In this context, Matafwali's (2010) findings that the lack of proficiency in the initial language of instruction was the hallmark of the poor reading and writing skills observed in the majority of Zambian children make a lot of sense. There is clear evidence that in Lusaka, the regional language or 'mother tongue' was not so familiar to the majority of the

children. Thus, Matafwali (2010) concludes that when deficits in oral language converge with deficits in cognitive skills, children are at a substantial risk of developing reading difficulties. The argument is that since children in Lusaka District were not proficient in the standard Cinyanja recognised in schools, they experienced problems in initial literacy acquisition (see also Banda & Mwanza, 2017).

Kalindi (2005) conducted a study on the reading problems experienced by 60 Grade 2 poor readers, who were identified by teachers from selected basic schools in Mpika and Kasama Urban in Northern Province in Zambia. Findings showed that 13 per cent were able to read two syllable words and only 8 per cent were able to identify 20 letters of the alphabet. The findings showed that even with excellent and intensive instruction in place, some pupils could not make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Among the reasons for the lack of substantial progress by pupils was the exclusive use of standard Cibemba as the medium of instruction, which turned out to be a barrier to learning. The standard Cibemba used in multi-ethnic/multilingual classes was not the mother tongue or familiar language to most of the learners, so they struggled to learn to read and write in it.

Apart from the misrecognition of the standard language discussed earlier, the imposition of zonal languages as official languages of education has also contributed to the inability of most pupils to acquire the skills of reading and writing, especially in communities where the familiar language is different from the zonal language, which is officially sanctioned for initial literacy teaching. In this regard, Zimba (2007) set out to establish whether the use of Cinyanja in a predominantly Citumbuka-speaking community in Lumezi District in Eastern Province was effective as a medium of initial literacy. The findings showed that pupils consistently performed below expectation because they could not understand Cinyanja, which was the official language of instruction. The assumed mutual intelligibility between Citumbuka and Cinyanja appeared to have very little impact, if any, on mediating initial literacy development in Cinyanja (see also Banda & Mwanza, 2017).

Similar findings were reported by Mubanga (2012), who wanted to establish the effect of using Cinyanja as the medium of instruction in a predominantly Cisoli-speaking area of Lwimba in Chongwe District, which falls under the Cinyanja language zone. The findings showed that children struggled to learn literacy because they could not speak and understand standard Cinyanja, which was the official medium of instruction. This finding is in line with that of Matafwali (2010), who also concluded that a lack of knowledge of the language of instruction by pupils was a barrier to literacy learning.

The negative effects of the institutionalised collective misrecognitions of the standard official language, as described earlier, are in part a consequence of, and compounded by, the rather outdated orthographies in place. Banda (2008; 2015)

lamented that opaque orthographic systems in Zambia and other African countries have also contributed to poor literacy levels in African languages. He explains that the outdated orthographies, which are being used in schools, present familiar sounds and words in unfamiliar ways due to faulty writing systems or spelling rules, which make children's knowledge of particular languages 'useless' (see also Banda & Mwanza, 2017).

In Europe, the use of a familiar language as a medium of classroom instruction has proved very progressive in literacy development by children. For instance, the Finnish National Board of Education (2000) conducted a study to discover the factors that contributed to the good literacy performance of Finnish youth. The findings showed that the transparent or 'shallow' orthography of the Finnish language ('what you say is what you write') gave extra advantage in the initial phase of learning to read (Finnish National Board of Education, 2000: 3).

Since the Finnish orthography is premised on the same notion of transparency as the Zambian languages' orthography, the findings by the Finnish Board of Education should be a good sign for Zambia. This is because Zambian languages have a one-to-one correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. Thus, once they are used as the medium of instruction for four years (as is the case now), they should provide the learner with an extra advantage in reading and writing abilities. However, the official Zambian orthography (Ministry of Education, 1977) still contains symbols that are not found in ordinary print, such as in school textbooks and newspapers.

Banda (2008) blames the orthographies for advocating rules of writing and alphabetical symbols that make it unnecessarily difficult for speakers to write in the languages they speak very well. For instance, the Cinyanja orthography has <l> and <r> as symbols representing distinct sounds or phonemes. However, mother-tongue speakers mostly use <l> in all situations and a few use the flapped <r> throughout, or in borrowed words. The fact that the standard form distinguishes between <l> and <r> means that pupils have to learn new rules in order to write in the language they might know very well (see also Banda & Mwanza, 2017). In short, our argument is that, unlike the Finnish situation, Zambian orthographies impede early literacy development because 'what you say is not what you write'.

From the preceding sections, it is clear that the Zambian language in education policy is premised on a monoglot/monolingual pupil, who speaks one particular standard or familiar language. This has proved problematic in initial literacy development because the policy is not reflective of the sociolinguistic situation and the linguistic repertoires of the target learners. Thus, there is a need to formulate a language policy that reflects the multilingual language practices on the ground, rather than depend on programmes that are framed in a monolingual/monocultural ideology. In this regard, Zambia's multilingualism and linguistic diversity should be at the centre of any policy implementation in schools. This implies that the status quo and the institutionalised hegemonic

existence of language varieties — where local varieties are displaced by zonal languages — should be challenged. The democratisation of the classroom, especially in as far as initial literacy development is concerned, means finding ways of using local languages such as Citumbuka in Lumezi and Cisoli in Chongwe districts, respectively. Experimentation with urban Cinyanja in Lusaka urban area and Cibemba in parts of the Copperbelt Province as the language of initial literacy needs to be encouraged in the continued search for better and practical ways of teaching initial literacy to children of diverse language abilities. Such a move would also help counter the language ideology behind the institutionalised collective misrecognition of the standard language, and hence mitigate its negative hegemonic effects, particularly in disadvantaging pupils who have little exposure or no access to the sanctioned language of initial literacy. This entails recognising local languages and/or pupils' multilingual repertoires as legitimate languages and resources in initial literacy development (see also Banda & Mwanza, 2017).

Significance of the study

Our study illustrates the weaknesses of monolingual/monoglot language policies and practices. The argument is that monolingual language practices create symbolic violence in which not only are learners unable to access knowledge but their voices are also silenced. Thus, this chapter proposes multilingual language practices and, in particular, translanguaging. The argument is that translanguaging, as a pedagogic practice, engenders multilingualism and connects the home and school so that home literacies work as cornerstones enabling access to school literacies.

Methods and materials

Our study was both qualitative and quantitative and employed interviews, observation and testing students' familiar language. A total of 94 respondents from two schools were sampled. From each school, 40 pupils participated in the language test and 10 teachers were sampled, while the head teacher and head of department also participated. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools because one needed to come from a high density area and the other one from a low density area. The 80 pupils were selected randomly. The data collection instruments included the interview guide, observation check list and the familiar language test. The data were analysed thematically and ethical issues were considered. In this regard, participation was voluntary and by informed consent. Participants were assured of confidentiality and that the data would be used only for academic purposes.

Findings

In the study, questions were about whether Cinyanja was a familiar language in Lusaka and whether teachers and pupils were familiar with Cinyanja. With regard

to pupils' familiarity with Cinyanja, teachers reported that while most of the pupils were familiar with Cinyanja, other were not as they spoke other languages such as English, Cibemba and Citonga. The following were some of the responses:

R1: *The majority of the pupils in Grade 1 are comfortable with Cinyanja because most of them have grown up in Lusaka; they are in the compounds where Nyanja is mostly spoken, so they know how to speak Nyanja.*

R2: *Some children come from parents who speak to them in English at home. Again, there are some children who passed through the preschools where the language of use was English. So to such children, the language of play is English. Some of the children go to preschool at the age of two and they grow up speaking English; to such pupils, the language of play is English.*

When asked about the variety of Cinyanja spoken by pupils in Lusaka, all the respondents reported that the variety spoken by pupils was different from the Cinyanja that was supposed to be the standard in schools and the one written in textbooks. The following were some of the responses:

R3: *The Cinyanja in the Grade 1 books is different from the one they are using because even for me as a teacher, I fail to understand some of the words. I use English sometimes … this Nyanja is difficulty.*

R4: *They are different. The one [Cinyanja] spoken in Lusaka has many foreign words. In fact, teachers do not use the classroom Nyanja. They use the Lusaka Nyanja which the pupils understand; the only problem is in Grade 7 where they are supposed to write the exams which are set in standard Nyanja again.*

R5: *There is a big difference — at home they call it* milisi *[maize] but here we call it* cimanga. *In addition, they call it 'door' at home but here we call it* citseko. *Even when it comes to the word for grass, we call it* msipu *in class but here in Lusaka they call it* mauzu.

To verify whether pupils were familiar with standard Cinyanja — which was the officially recommended variety for use in schools in literacy teaching and learning — a familiar language test was administered. This was done by showing an object or picture to a pupil and asking them to name of the object in Cinyanja. The findings are recorded in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Findings from a familiar language test

SL #	Name of object in English	Name of object in standard Cinyanja	Names of object according to pupils' responses	Names of object in Cinyanja which were mutually intelligible
1	Vehicle	Galimoto	Motoka, kamotoka, cimotoka, mota	✓
2	Bird	Mbalame	Kanyoni, nyoni, cinyoni, bird, akoni	✗
3	Radio	Wailesi	Cilimba, kalimba, radio, wailesi, icilimba	✓
4	Mirror	Kalilole	Mirror	✗
5	Mother	Amai	Mummy, amai, amummy, ba mummy	✓
6	Teacher	Aphunzitsi	A teacher, ba teacher, teacher	✗
7	Egg	Dzira	Egg, eggs, amani, ilini	✗
8	Pencil	Pensulo	Pencil, a pencil, colembera	✓
9	Hoe	Khasu	Kambwiri, hoe, a hoe, colimilako	✗
10	Rat	Khoswe	Koswe, kakoswe, cikoswe, mbeba, kambeba, rat, a rat	✓
11	Door	Citseko	Door, a door, I don't know	✗
12	Trousers	Buluku	Trousers, buluku, toloshi, a trousers	✓
13	Cat	Cona	Pusi, kapusi, cipusi, pushi, cat, a cat, kit, ka kit	✗
14	Girl	Mtsikana	Mkazi, girl, a girl, jelita, misozi	✓
15	Water	Madzi	Manzi, water, menda, mezi	✓
16	Milk	Mkaka	Milk, cowbell, meleki	✗
17	Grass	Msipu	Mauzu, grass, uzu, vimauzu, tumauzu	✗
18	Ball	Mpira	Bola, ball, a ball	✗
19	Groundnuts	Mtedza	Nshawa, nyemu, groundnuts	✗
20	Lion	Mkango	Nkhalamu, lion, I don't know	✗

Source: The authors

Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that there were many differences between the Cinyanja spoken during play and the standard Cinyanja, which is officially recognised and is the 'language' of initial literacy—most pupils were not familiar with the standard

variety, while others spoke completely different languages from Cinyanja such as English. There is an emerging sociolinguistic trend in Lusaka where English has become the first language to some of the pupils. Due to the high prestige associated with English, some parents opt to teach their children English at home, right from the start. In this case, the mother tongue or familiar language is English and not necessarily an indigenous Zambian language. Therefore, this moves the sociolinguistic discourse from considering English as 'always' being the unfamiliar language to considering it as one of the familiar languages and even the mother tongue of some Zambians.

The data showed that even the teachers were not fluent in Cinyanja and, as observed, the type of Cinyanja they spoke was not the standard one recognised in schools and there were many instances of 'code-switching' and 'code-mixing'. For example, in school X, the teacher started the lesson with a statement in English and the pupils responded in English. In her second sentence, she spoke in Cinyanja with two instances of 'code-switching'. Interestingly, her third sentence was in English. This clearly showed that either the teacher was not proficient in Cinyanja or her pupils were not and she was translanguaging in order to communicate with those who could not understand standard Cinyanja. It was evident throughout the lesson that whenever she had problems expressing herself in Cinyanja, she resorted to English.

A similar scenario was observed in school Y, where the teacher only asked the pupils to stand and sit down in Cinyanja and greeted them in English. The greetings went on for some time before the teacher went back to Cinyanja. Strikingly, the pupils were able to understand and speak to the teacher in English. It appears that many teachers are more comfortable with English but teach in Cinyanja only because the policy demands it of them. In both schools, when the teachers felt that the pupils did not understand them, they resorted to English. Therefore, English seemed to be one of the most preferred languages of communication in Lusaka, both by the teachers and the pupils. This explains why, during interviews, most respondents said that they were better off teaching initial literacy in English as opposed to Cinyanja.

In addition, the teachers mispronounced many of the words in Cinyanja—mostly due to mother tongue influence. It was observed that most words that have an aspirated /p/ marked by the consonant cluster 'ph', as in *kuphunzisa*, were pronounced without the /h/. This was also observed in *tikhale* which was pronounced as *tinkale* by the teacher. To be specific, the teacher pronounced Cinyanja words as if they were Cibemba words. It must be noted that in Bantu languages, there is a one-to-one correspondence between pronunciation and spelling—that is, words are written phonetically. By implication, this means that the Grade 1 teachers were misleading their pupils when they mispronounced words because the pupils would eventually learn the wrong spelling which would mean a different word to a native speaker of the language. This has a negative impact,

not only on the pupils but also on the teachers because they write the incorrect words on the blackboard. These mismatches between the official orthography and the actual language use by the teachers impacts negatively on learners' literacy acquisition.

In addition, as seen in both schools, it appears that both teachers and pupils lack sufficient vocabulary to speak fluently in Cinyanja. For example, in school X, the teacher did not know the word for 'match' (*kuyanjanitsa*) while in school Y, the teacher did not know the Cinyanja word for flower (*duwa/maluwa*). These are just a few examples of how limited the teachers were in Cinyanja and, in these instances, they used English equivalents. What we see is a consistent mismatch between the familiar languages of both the teacher and the pupils and the standard variety recommended for literacy teaching in Lusaka. The Cinyanja spoken in Lusaka has a lot of borrowed words.

Miti and Monaka (2009) reported that because of multilingualism, when teachers are recruited to teach at primary school, some are taken to regions where the language of instruction is not their mother tongue and they fail to teach initial literacy using the recommended Zambian language in the region. This meant that most teachers had problems handling Grade 1s in the era of the New Breakthrough to Literacy. Banda and Mwanza (2017) also argued that in Zambia, there is institutionalised misrecognition of standard varieties of language, where the standard prescribed for use in a particular region is not actually the familiar language in the locality.

In the study, while the pupils could understand the teachers when they spoke in 'Lusaka Nyanja', almost all the pupils were not able to understand when the teacher gave instruction in the standard Cinyanja recognised in schools. For example, in school X situated in a high-density area, there was a stage in the lesson when a teacher read sentences from the Grade 1 content book and asked the pupils to explain what they understood from the sentences. It soon became clear that pupils were neither familiar nor proficient with the standard Cinyanja used in the Grade 1 books and they did not understand the culture of the Cinyanja language. Mwanza (2012) noted that language is a vehicle of culture, which implies that the effective use and understanding of a language depends on knowledge of the culture of the first speakers of the language. This means that even if learners are familiar with the syntax of a sentence, this will not necessarily help them to understand the meaning of the statement.

Snow (1991) noted that a child's language proficiency at entry into kindergarten was an excellent prediction of their reading skills during early to middle primary school years. Thus, the language of instruction in early years of primary education should be one which pupils are familiar with especially considering the inseparability of language and cognition—language helps us to communicate effectively and understand our world and to shape our concepts and thoughts. This suggests that the prevailing language situation in Lusaka District in terms of

policy and practice is a recipe for poor literacy development. Pupils are likely to continue performing below expectation because they cannot understand 'standard' Cinyanja, which is supposed to be their language of instruction and thinking.

Towards multilingual language practices in multilingual classrooms

It is clear that there is a disparity between the recommended standard variety of Cinyanja and that with which pupils and teachers are familiar. This creates misunderstanding in some cases and failure to relay information in other cases. As a coping strategy, both teachers and pupils resorted to other languages, including the informal variety of Cinyanja. This is contrary to the language policy which stipulates the use of one language, that is monolingual/monoglot language practices, in the classroom. Observations of actual classroom practices show that policy can be negotiated and, in some cases, neglected. As Huckin, Andrus and Clary-Lemon (2012: 115) explain: 'the classroom is a place in which power is circulated, managed, exploited, resisted and often directly impacted by institutional policies and changes'. In this case, teachers and pupils use their power to negotiate and at times neglect the policy directive to use standard Cinyanja. as the language of classroom communication.

We wish to argue for the legitimisation of languages spoken by pupils without limitation to the standard variety. This will entail an appreciation of both teachers and learners' linguistic repertoires including the informal varieties of Cinyanja spoken in Lusaka. When these varieties are legitimised, teachers and pupils will be able to use them in the classroom without feeling guilty. In essence, the legalisation of learners' linguistic repertoires will mean that translanguaging should become the norm rather than the exception in the multilingual classrooms of Lusaka. By definition, translanguaging refers to 'the purposeful pedagogical alternation of languages in spoken and written, receptive and productive modes' (Hornberger & Link, 2012: 262; see Williams, 1994). The basic principle of translanguaging as a classroom practice is to engender multilingual and multimodal literacies. As García (2009: 44) notes, translanguaging is about 'engaging in bilingual or multilingual discourse practices [and] not on languages as has often been the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable'. Whereas standard Cinyanja, for example, may work in some homogenous groups in some remote areas of Katete and Chadiza, in most parts of urbanising Zambia — where heterogeneity, multilingualism and multiculturalism are the norm — it is not pedagogically valid to propose and recommend monolingual policies, practices and ideologies. This means attempts to champion home language or familiar language are misplaced because they do not account for pupils' multilingual linguistic behaviour. This may partly explain why initial literacy development initiatives through a singular mother tongue or familiar language have not yielded the desired results.

Conclusion

Zambia, and Lusaka in particular, is multilingual. It has been noted that official policy recommends monolingualism, which is at variance with the sociolinguistic reality and language practices of the teachers and learners. It is time to consider alternative models, especially those that focus on multilingual discourses in the classroom. In the translanguaging model, for example, the teacher may teach in standard Cinyanja and/or English, while pupils may respond or discuss in different language varieties. This would enable the learners to participate fully in the classroom and, at the same time, get exposed to the different language varieties (including the standard ones) (Banda, 2010).

Are translanguaging and code-switching one and the same? In clarifying the difference, Hornberger and Link (2012: 263) contend that research on code-switching 'tended to focus on issues of language interference, transfer or borrowing' while 'translanguaging "shifts the lens from cross-linguistic influence" to how multilinguals "intermingle linguistic features that have hereto been administratively or linguistically assigned to a particular language or language variety"'. In addition, translanguaging is multimodal and, thus, widens the research possibilities in that it transcends verbal communication (both spoken and written language) to other mediated and mediatised modes and related literacies that pupils bring to the classroom. Zambian children, including those in rural areas, have been exposed to, and continue to be introduced to, new technologies such as cell phones and other computerised gadgetry. More important, following Banda (2010) and Blackledge and Creese (2010), we want to argue that alternative bilingual models of classroom practice, such as translanguaging, can help the pupils, their families and educators to mitigate and counteract the negative effects of monolingual language ideologies and policies, as well as bridge home and school multilingual literacy practices and identities. In this case, the horizontal and vertical discourses will co-work in literacy teaching/learning and development. As a result, pupils will have a voice and classroom symbolic violence will be avoided.

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Disparities between reading fluency and comprehension: What do we miss?

Margaret Funke Omidire & Anna-Barbara du Plessis

Introduction

The recent South African results of the PIRLS (2016) study report that most South African (SA) learners in Intermediate Phase across all language groups, genders and socio-economic levels cannot read adequately for meaning. Although present throughout the school population, with girls generally being better readers, the lack of reading skills increases in challenging educational settings. In South Africa, challenging educational settings are typically poorly resourced with all the associated issues such as unemployment, poverty, crime and a lack of access to medical care. When scrutinised, it becomes apparent that not only do schools in challenging educational settings have to deal with impactful social challenges, but they also have to contend with the problem of having learners speaking a multitude of languages in one class. Although education in the mother tongue is entrenched in the South African Constitution, the reality is that there is a lack of multilingual teachers, multilingual school materials and library books in different languages, so English is used as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). These and other challenges are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this volume.

The teaching of English as a First Additional Language (FAL) becomes paramount to good communication, not only in schools, but also country- and worldwide. Currently, most schools in South Africa, especially those in challenging contexts, use the predominant mother tongue of the area to teach the Foundation Phase (Grades R–3, approximately 6–9 years old), while introducing English as a FAL. However, once learners enter the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6, approximately 10–12 years old), the LoLT becomes English, until Grade 12 (approximately 18 years old). The acquisition of good English communication and academic skills is essential to school success and further career development and employment. However, most of the learners have limited exposure to English, especially at home. In an attempt to redress some of the inequalities in the quality

of education in South Africa, a non-profit organisation affiliated with a major company in South Africa donates libraries equipped with mostly English books to participating primary schools in resource-constrained contexts. The organisation also provides librarians to work in the libraries. The librarians expose learners to books and reinforce reading skills taught in class.

So that the organisation could establish the impact of these libraries on the literacy levels of the learners that use them, an impact assessment was necessary. An effective and efficient impact assessment would establish the outcome of the learners in an unbiased way and assist the NGO to identify areas of strength and areas where other support strategies might still be required. These support needs for learners may vary from special needs to those that require a review of their basic reading and understanding skills in reading, to support for potentially gifted learners. The primary step in implementing a virtuous reading instruction is to determine the learners' baseline performance as learners enter into a classroom with diverse backgrounds and literacy skills. It was through the research done for the NGO that the spotlight fell on reading comprehension of English as a FAL.

Reading and comprehension skills are critical for the levels of knowledge construction and application. In the classroom, for appropriate learning to take place, the learners have to be able to construct knowledge and apply meaning to those concepts and units of learning they come across. Post classroom encounter, learners must then reconstruct what they have come across, identifying main points and memorising and internalising these using various strategies to ensure adequate learning in preparation for assessment (Omidire, 2009). Research has shown that there is a relationship between academic proficiency in the language of learning and teaching (English) and achievement; and also that a lack of proficiency impacts assessment and progression (Howie, 2004; Prinsloo, 2016).

The Department of Education's 2007 Annual School Survey indicated that 65 per cent of South African learners used English as the language of teaching and learning (DoE, 2007) and that figure has been on the increase. Of the South African learners in Grade 4 tested in PIRLS 2006 only 13 per cent could achieve the lowest benchmarks for reading as opposed to 94 per cent of their Grade 4 international peers (Howie et al, 2012). Howie et al (2012) in the prePIRLS 2011 found that 29 per cent of Grade 4 learners were completely illiterate in the language of teaching and learning. This is discussed extensively in Chapter 13 of this volume. Research has shown that there are few or no opportunities for language development and enrichment. The classroom environment encourages chorusing and collective answering and shallow responses (Hoadley, 2010).

Pretorius and Ribbens (2005) confirm other earlier research indicating a strong relationship between fluency and comprehension, but also found that 60 per cent of Grade 5 learners in rural schools were reading at Grade 1 level and, thus, assumptions of very low literacy and comprehension levels can safely be made. This outcome links to multilingualism in the classroom where as many as

three or four languages can be represented in any given classroom, apart from the language of instruction, which is different from the learners' home languages. This situation creates a challenge for teachers who have to ensure that, irrespective of the language of instruction, high-level learning occurs, with comprehension and learner engagement, as opposed to mere rote learning (Omidire, 2014).

The importance of evidence-based intervention into raising the level of comprehension and critical thinking skills among learners cannot be overstated, partly because of the impact these skills have on other areas of the curriculum but also, by implication, the progression/repetition rate, drop-out rates and work opportunities post compulsory schooling (Omidire, Bouwer & Jordan, 2011; Omidire, 2014). To ensure that library interventions are appropriate and are achieving the set goals, some form of evaluation has to be conducted. This was the aim of the Library Usage Programme, which was developed as an impact assessment instrument of the NGO to measure word reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension. These are used to calculate a learner's reading level and reading age. The assessment also records the learner's observable reading behaviour and the frequency of this behaviour. The purposes of the different aspects of the Library Usage Programme are as follows:

- The *word reading accuracy* assessment determines the number of words the learner reads accurately in 60 seconds.
- The *reading fluency* assessment counts the number of words from the passage that each learner reads correctly and how long it takes to read the whole passage.
- The *comprehension skills* questions after the passages are designed to reflect both literal and inferential understanding.
- *Basic recall* questions ask the learner to produce answers that show their understanding of the passage, in simple terms. The answer to the question is stated in the passage, but it may not be stated in exactly the same words or be a paraphrase.
- I*nference and interpretation*: simple inference questions require learners to bring together knowledge from different parts of the passage, or to bring their own experience to bear in understanding the text.

The assessments were developed using the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for teaching and learning English, First Additional Language (DBE, 2011a). The assessments were designed to assess the learners' word reading fluency, text reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension. There were two assessments per grade. The first assessment (A) was based on the first and second quarters' expected outcomes per grade. The second assessment (B) was based on the third and fourth quarters' expected outcomes. These assessments were specifically designed for the Library Usage Programme, for administration by

teachers and trained library assistants. They were not designed for psychological assessment and interpretation as such.

The completed instrument was submitted to an independent critical reader for evaluation to ensure quality assurance. The critical reader suggested revisions to the instrument. These revisions were made and the instrument was finalised for the pilot study. The purpose of piloting was to check that the passages could be read and understood by learners and that the questions elicited the expected answers. Piloting is part of the validation of the assessment. Each of the word cards, passages and questions (set A) were piloted before being finalised.

Schools involved

Purposive sampling was used by the NGO to identify two schools for the pilot study: one school already benefited from the library scheme while the other had not and did not yet have a library. Both schools were in the same geographical location, had similar learner/teacher demographics and were situated in challenging educational (and social) contexts. The first school had been a beneficiary of the library project for seven years (and still is). The learners had been exposed to regular library usage and had developed a reading culture to some extent. This school is hereafter referred to as the Intervention School. The second school was one that the NGO had already identified as being a possible beneficiary of the library project. At the time of the pilot study, the school did not have a library and so it was selected as the Control School.

Learners involved

Learners in Grades 1–6 were sampled from both schools. The teachers were asked to identify learners in their classes and stratify them by level of achievement in English and across other subject areas of the curriculum. The achievement levels were classified as high, average and low. One learner was selected per class and grade based on these achievement criteria. The stratification by achievement based on teacher recommendation was used to compare the results of the assessment using the instrument, thereby establishing whether the instrument could, indeed, distinguish between the various achievement groups based on the results. The teachers selected three learners per class (high, average and low achievers).

- A learner identified by the teacher as a 'good reader' in that grade should be able to read at least 54 words (90 per cent) of the passage correctly within 70 seconds and to answer four questions correctly.
- A learner identified by the teacher as an 'average reader' in that grade should be able to read at least 30 words (50 per cent) but less than 54 words (90 per cent) of the passage correctly.
- A learner identified by the teacher as a 'beginner reader' in that grade should be able to read at least six words (10 per cent) of the passage.

There were more learners/participants in the Intervention School simply because each grade had more classes (A–E) as opposed to the Control School which had fewer classes (A–C). There were 78 learners involved in the pilot from the Intervention School and 54 from the Control School.

The study was conducted over a period of two days, one day per school. The teachers and the learners had prior knowledge of the visit and the teacher-stratified lists of the learners were made available to the team. The key points of the assessments were revisited and questions answered. The learners were thereafter addressed in groups by grade. The team was briefly introduced and the whole process explained again in English, isiZulu and Sesotho. The assessment took an average of about six minutes per learner.

Findings

The learners' response sheets were collected and collated. The preliminary examination of all the sheets was conducted to identify possible discrepancies. The response sheets were then sorted using the teachers' provided list and arranged according to achievement level. Each learner's details (age, grade, achievement level and mark for word fluency and comprehension) were entered into a specially prepared Excel spreadsheet. The analysis involved the calculation of the learner's age in months, the learner's marks per achievement level and grade, and the overall average per grade. Each learner's behaviour during the reading was also noted, coded and recorded.

The results showed that the word lists, as well as the reading passages, could distinguish between good and poor readers. The results also indicated that although many learners could read fluently, their comprehension of text, based on mostly factual questions, was very limited, suggesting that the way in which English is taught fails to prepare learners to understand the text. Figures 9.1–9.3 indicate that the library programme does have a positive effect on the reading and comprehension abilities of the learners but that there is still a long way to go to uplift comprehension to an age-appropriate level, as discussed later.

Discussion

The results of the study are revealing on several levels. Firstly, learners' abilities in terms of word fluency, reading of the passages and comprehension of what was read, was demonstrated by answering the comprehension questions. Secondly, the study enabled a comparison of the schools. Thirdly, it gave an indication of the adequacy/appropriateness of the assessments to distinguish between the high, average and low achievers per school. Lastly, the study helped to identify areas where the learners require support.
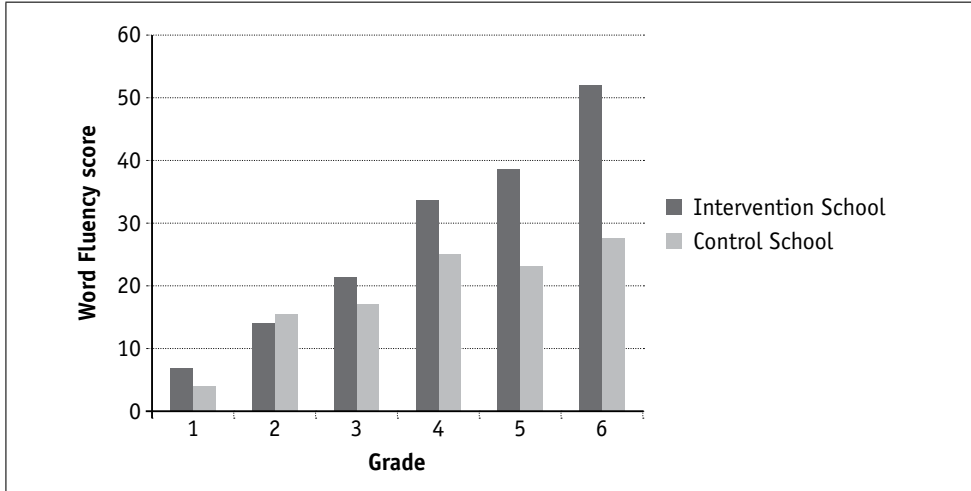
Figure 9.1: Comparison of word fluency scores between Intervention and Control schools
Source: Assessment results
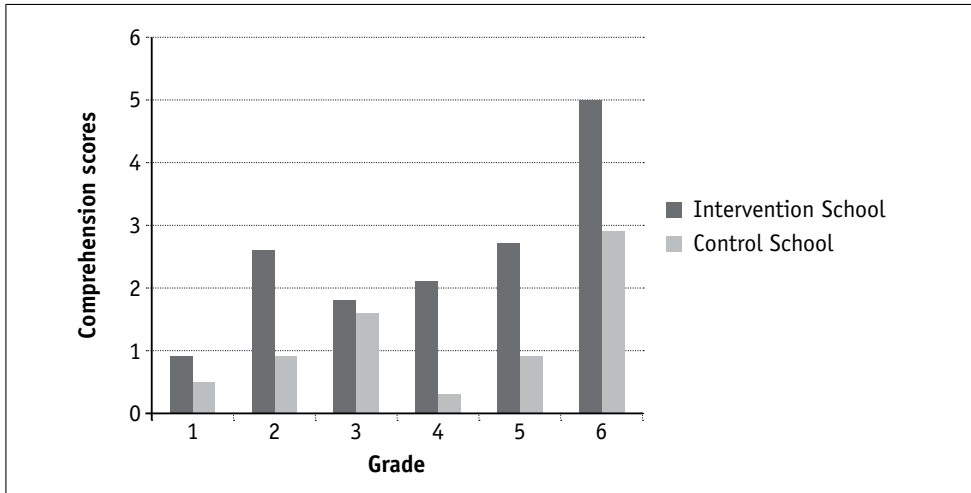
Figure 9.2: Comparison of comprehension scores between Intervention and Control schools
Source: Assessment results
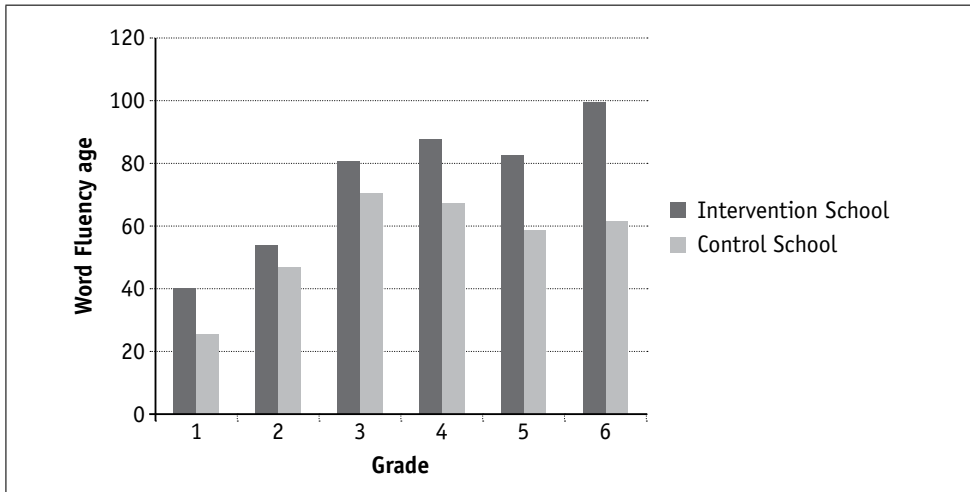
Figure 9.3: Comparison of word fluency age (months) between Intervention and Control schools

Source: Assessment results

Learners (word fluency and comprehension)

While a few individual learners in the 'high' and 'average' categories were able to read most of the words on the word fluency and the comprehension, the vast majority read below the expectation, thus decreasing the group averages. Even the learners who were able to read the passages well, performed poorly on the comprehension questions—an indication that comprehension and independent thinking constituted challenges for the learners. The question remains: what do we miss in the disparity between word fluency and comprehension? Some answers may be found in variables derived from the PIRLS study where the number of years' teaching experience as well as the size of the school library are considered variables for success (see Chapter 13).

Overall the learners in the Intervention School (with the library) performed better than the learners in the Control School (without a library), revealing the positive impact the library programme had on the learners in the Intervention School. The averages for this school per grade were considerably higher for both the word fluency and the comprehension. There was, however, a clear indication that comprehension skills still needed to be developed in both schools. Comprehension appeared to be a challenge and strategies for developing this have to be addressed from the teachers', learners' and contextual dimensions.

The challenging nature of comprehension is explained by Luke, Dooley and Woods (2011), who state that comprehension is a cognitive, social and intellectual phenomenon. They draw on the four role/resources model of Freebody and Luke (1990), in Luke, Dooley and Woods (2011), to establish in which role/resource

(code-breaker, meaning-maker, text user, text analyst) comprehension can be best addressed. They suggest that comprehension can be addressed in the meaning-maker role/resources if the classroom instruction incorporates community practices. Janks (2011) is of a similar opinion. She identified an array of 12 reading strategies and sorted the strategies into the four reading roles. She came to the conclusion that improving comprehension does not require strategies in the code-breaker role, but rather strategies in the other three roles, starting with the meaning-making role. Crucial in the meaning-making role is linking reading with the learners' own life worlds, thereby linking back to the social aspect of comprehension, as stated by Luke et al (2011).

Strategies to support reading comprehension in multilingual classrooms

The PIRLS 2016 study clearly indicted the factors that contribute to being a good reader at Grade 4 level:
- home environments that are supportive of literacy learning;
- an early start in literacy learning;
- well-resourced and academically orientated schools;
- safe, orderly and disciplined schools;
- highly prioritised reading instruction;
- regular school attendance;
- well-rested and not hungry learners; and
- positive attitudes towards reading.

Unfortunately, the factors that contribute to helping learners to be good readers are spread across the social, economic, school and education systems, so it it not easy to improve reading and comprehension. Educators have little power to facilitate supportive home environments, prepare learners for an early start in literacy, provide well-resourced schools, ensure regular school attendance or well-fed and well-rested learners. However, educators do have the ability to contribute to academically oriented, safe, orderly and disciplined schools that prioritise reading instruction and facilitate positive attitudes towards reading. Where multilingualism is at stake, educators have the above responsibilities towards all the learners in their class and school, irrespective of the learners' home language. In this chapter, suggestions are made for prioritised reading instruction and creating positive attitudes towards reading within multilingual contexts, because these factors are within an educator's expected field of expertise to contribute to good readers.

Reading instruction

According to PIRLS 2016, prioritised reading instruction is understood as 18 per cent of all instructional time at school being used for reading instruction,

which includes access to the school libraries and computers. As the findings of the study reported in this chapter indicated that learners struggled with reading comprehension, the rest of the chapter is devoted to reading instruction to improve English reading comprehension in multilingual, challenging contexts.

PIRLS (2016) identified two comprehension processes: a basic retrieving and inferencing comprehension process, and a more advanced interpreting and integrating comprehension process. South African Grade 4 learners achieved a scaled score significantly lower than the overall PIRLS 2016 scores for interpreting and integrating (Howie et al, 2017), probably indicating the difficulty many learners in multilingual classrooms experience in accessing the texts. Whichever comprehension process is at stake, reading comprehension requires interaction between the learner, who possesses certain knowledge, and the text which contains information, thus involving the active process of thought (Lerner & Johns, 2015). Comprehension can occur if there is a match between the knowledge the learner has and the information in the text. However, in multilingual classrooms in challenging contexts learners often not only lack the existing knowledge to comprehend text, but also the vocabulary to comprehend the text. So even if decoding, analysis and pronunciation of the words do occur, thereby achieving reading fluency, reading comprehension is not attained. Lerner and Johns (2015) are accurate when they conclude that 'no amount of rereading will increase comprehension' (2015: 355) if learners do not have the background knowledge or relevant vocabulary, thereby echoing the opinion of Janks (2011) and Luke et al (2011) regarding incorporating the life worlds of the learners in the reading and comprehension strategies.

Educators should, therefore, first determine that the content of the text presented to a class is familiar to the learners, after which the vocabulary required in the text needs to be explained. In a multilingual challenging context, educators can consider group work to attain the above. Heterogeneous groupings of learners with different home languages can be used (and not according to reading ability) so that peers can act as translators. During this group work, code-switching can easily occur to explain words and concepts in the different home languages (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2016). Often in these contexts, learners have been exposed to different home languages since infancy, thus enabling them to understand and communicate during play, and making them ideal translators in a multilingual classroom. By using the assets and strengths of the learners, active participation in learning and comprehension can be supported (Nel et al, 2016).

Reading comprehension can also be developed by reading a book of their choice. Educators can frequently ask questions that require thinking. Questions can start with vocabulary, and then gradually move from short sentences to longer sentences. For example, show pictures, then say, 'show me the dog'; 'show me the dog that is sitting/standing/lying down'; 'why is the dog sitting/standing/lying down?'

Other strategies the educator can employ to improve reading comprehension (Lerner & Johns, 2015) include modelling to learners how they can monitor their own comprehension by making them aware of what they understand or do not understand. By working in groups, co-operative learning can take place where peers promote understanding of text and vocabulary. Making pictures of the text (for younger learners) and making story maps (for older learners) can also support comprehension, especially if the visual images promote comprehension and not only vocabulary. Learners can be asked questions and be encouraged to create their own questions, and they can be taught to use the structure of the text to increase understanding. Summarising the text can also promote comprehension. By applying the above strategies in groups, English reading comprehension can be supported by utilising the strengths and available knowledge of the learners within the group.

Similar to Lerner and Johns (2015), PIRLS 2016 identifies two purposes of reading, namely literary reading (narrative text) and informational reading. In general, South African Grade 4 learners obtained a significantly higher scaled score than the overall PIRLS score for literary reading, but a significantly lower scaled score for informational reading (Howie et al, 2017), suggesting that the content of stories may be more familiar to learners in challenging contexts than the content of informational texts (also see the discussion on textbooks in the following paragraph). Considering the limited exposure to information in challenging contexts, the scores should not be surprising.

Comprehension strategies for the different purposes differ as well. In literary (narrative) texts, learners must be taught to identify characters, settings, times, places, events and problem-solving in different genres. For informational texts, teachers can implement some of the already-mentioned reading comprehension strategies to promote comprehension, once again relying on the assets and strengths that individual learners bring to groups. Starting with incidental reading, such as reading a stop sign, the names of shops in the community, the names of buildings such as the clinic, again draws from available reading material of which the meaning is clear, thereby promoting comprehension. In Grade 4, with the introduction of English textbooks and learning subjects such as history, natural science and geography, the working pace is often too fast for multilingual learners. Their plight in comprehension is often exacerbated by textbooks written in language more difficult than the grade level in which they are used and the absence of teaching reading skills from Grade 4 onwards (Lerner & Johns, 2015).

In the absence of school libraries, schools can pool available books and share them among schools in a certain area. The Read-me-to-Resilience (Rm2R) project has three booklets (in English, isiZulu and isiXhosa) containing 16 traditional, illustrated, African stories which are available at no cost from the internet. Having a book in their own language may encourage learners to begin to read. Additionally, readers of different languages can share the same stories and discuss the same stories with other learners. As an added bonus, the stories in the Rm2R booklets

were identified by educational psychologists specifically for their contribution to resilience building, thus providing emotional support for learners in challenging contexts (http://readmetoresilience.co.za/).

Learners can also be supported to develop their own reading material in their own languages by using pictures cut from the free advertisements often distributed at retail shops. Similarly, an original story created by the class, but written in different languages and illustrated by class members, can make a valuable contribution to the reading collection of a grade. These books will also be useful to learners in the same grade in years to come. Cereal boxes and other food packaging often contain interesting content; even empty paint containers carry instructions which can be read.

Creating positive attitudes towards reading within multilingual contexts

By respecting the diversity of languages in a classroom, an educator can contribute to positive attitudes towards reading, as languages are not belittled. Allowing for expression in the language of choice is a first step in creating a positive attitude within a multilingual context. Acknowledging and/or celebrating different festivals/days of the different cultures/languages and ways of doing things can support positivity towards reading, especially if the celebration is written down on the board or in the schoolbooks. Discussing and writing idiomatic expressions in different languages can also foster positive attitudes towards reading.

The example set by the educator in modelling appropriate behaviour is crucial. Accepting others, learning how to greet in other languages, asking learners to help with code-switching certain words, making mistakes and learning from mistakes, and allowing for expression in other languages (Nel et al, 2016) can contribute to a positive atmosphere in class regarding learning, and learning in other languages specifically.

Educators can use visual images to promote vocabulary, and thus comprehension. Objects in the class can be labelled, as well as actions. Nel et al (2016) suggest a language corner containing books and magazines (bought, borrowed or made, as explained) where learners can be exposed to language in a non-threatening way.

The parents can collaborate in promoting positive attitudes towards reading by also promoting the importance of reading, even if they are illiterate. Positive attitudes towards English comprehension can be supported when parents allow their children to listen to English radio/TV programmes. By endorsing any form of literacy in any language, parents can convey to their children that reading is important (based on Nel et al, 2016), thereby cultivating a positive attitude.

This section has dealt with suggestions for the educators to increase reading comprehension in multilingual challenging concepts and to facilitate a positive attitude to reading. By empowering educators in these ways, it is hoped that

learners in multilingual challenging contexts can be supported to benefit from multilingualism rather than be challenged by the many languages.

Socio-economic context

Socio-economic contexts of schools also play a role in the learners' ability to read and understand the content of texts. Where there are limited resources and support for teachers, the effect on learners is also visible. Some of these challenges need to be addressed systemically where a concerted effort is made to provide resources through collaboration with better-resourced schools. The schools need to consciously promote the culture of reading in multiple languages and not just English.

Teachers should be encouraged to teach comprehension strategies and not simply decoding skills and make use of code-switching, code-mixing and translanguaging (see Chapter 2) and peer support. Learners need to understand that their home languages are resources that can be used to facilitate the development of comprehension skills and learning.

Teacher training, teacher commitment and teacher support of the library programme will have to be revisited to address this lack of comprehension, without which transformation cannot take place and without which learners cannot be expected to progress in school.

Conclusion

The findings from the study revealed the impact of the library on the learners' fluency and comprehension skills. The library project should be continued and teachers encouraged to participate actively in all aspects of the project. This extremely worthwhile project, which endeavours to empower adults and children from the community through literacy, can be focused to achieve even more success by incorporating the teaching of comprehension skills. The development of these skills would ensure that learners are able to make connections with prior experiences and readings, and also make inferences based on the texts read. The solution to reading comprehension in multilingual classrooms is a combination of systemic and instructional strategies. These strategies should include a change in attitude to the home languages of the learners in order to use these languages as assets that facilitate the understanding of the learning materials.

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Using technology as a resource for teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms

Tony John Mays

Introduction

Traditionally, when people thought about a typical classroom setting, they imagined a teacher standing in front of rows of desks, holding 'the' prescribed textbook and alternately talking and writing things on a chalkboard for learners to copy into their exercise books. Looking around the classroom, they would expect to see learners who all looked similar, dressed in the same school uniform and answering and asking questions in the same language. A typical urban classroom no longer looks or sounds like this. Instead, it is characterised by greater diversity, especially regarding learners' home backgrounds, the languages they speak and the expectations they and their parents have of their teachers. Increasingly, as well, the physical walls of the language classroom have become permeable as access to technology and connectivity grow, requiring teachers to rethink *what* they teach, *how* they teach it and *why* (Leung & Scarino, 2016). This chapter explores ways in which technology can help teachers to build on the tremendous wealth of having such diversity in the classroom and examines proactive interventions and support for learning and learning development in multilingual settings.

The chapter investigates the available technologies to support teaching practices at various stages of the language learning journey: reception and integration, access to the curriculum, developing home language competences and developing additional language competence (ICF Consulting, 2015). Given the growing access to an ever-increasing range of online resources, the chapter then explores the special case of open educational resources (OERs) (Mays, 2017b) and the potential of the combination of technology and OERs to open up opportunities to promote access and success in multilingual environments. Several examples of this combination of enabling factors are reviewed for their efficacy and then the implications for teacher development and the best use of technology in the multilingual classroom are discussed.

Changing needs in a multilingual language-learning journey

Learners' needs change as they engage with the education system, with classroom practices and with native speakers of other languages. In South Africa, most high schools have chosen English as their language of learning and teaching. The challenges faced by learners as they progress from a lower grade, where the home language was used, to a higher grade where English is used, have been known for many years (Macdonald & Burroughs, 1991). Similar challenges are faced by learners moving from another country, where another language was used for teaching and learning purposes, or when learners travel to other countries to immerse themselves in the authentic use of a target language in an authentic context. As they progress through a period of *interlanguage* development and experimental trial and error (Krashen, 1982; Ellis, 1985) to develop basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS or conversational language) and then progress to cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP or academic language) (Cummins, 1979), learners' resource and support needs change. There is thus a need for the appropriate placement of learners based on appropriate assessment of their language support needs (a learner may struggle with learning science because of the language rather than the science content per se [Ooyo, 2017]) and for additional support needs to be provided to help learners immerse themselves in the target language and begin to use it as soon as possible (ICF Consulting, 2015). It is important to have systematic measures to guide assessment of 'before' and 'after' language competence (Tullock & Ortega, 2017) and technology can assist with all these issues.

However, recruiting, training and supporting staff able to assess and assist learners appropriately in the bilingual and multilingual and multicultural environments in South Africa remains a challenge (Van Dulm & Southwood, 2013). It is also important that we see the rich diversity of languages and language competences in the classroom as a creative space for collaborative and co-operative learning, recognising that all learners and teachers have something they can still learn or improve in an increasingly complex multilingual, multiliterate and multicultural environment, rather than adopting a deficit approach of measuring all learners against some single ideal (Daniels & Richards, 2017). For example, Condy (in News24, 2014) recommends a number of general strategies that may be useful such as the deliberate use of multicultural resources, as well as the use of metaphors.

To support meaningful access to the curriculum, schools need to consider support that can be offered in the classroom (for instance, inclusion of specifically designed language activities in subject-teaching), outside the classroom (for example, homework clubs and other opportunities to engage with the target language in non-formal ways, including parental involvement), and adapted teaching approaches by class teachers (for example, supply of additional tools and resources, including digital ones, to support language acquisition) (ICF Consulting, 2015).

The research suggests that learners' competence in the language of learning and teaching can be enhanced if they also have the opportunity, formally, to develop their home language competence and also when multiple language use is encouraged and code-switching is seen as a natural part of the learning process (Ramaligela, 2011; ICF Consulting, 2015). Given that social interactions outside of the classroom are increasingly mediated through the use of various technologies, it then seems useful to consider how teachers might use these technologies to support both informal and formal language learning in and outside of the classroom, as recommended in a growing body of literature on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Kessler, 2018).

Technology to support language learning

Different technologies lend themselves to different kinds of learning activities and so teachers need to be clear upfront on the language learning they want to nurture, the strategies that may be appropriate and then what technology they will choose to use and how (Parette, Blum & Luthin, 2013). Teachers can start with existing technologies and consider the ways they can be used to support language learning needs; or they can identify language learning needs and then find appropriate technologies to address these; and they must always think about how to support those learners who need a little extra help at times in their language-learning journey, discussed later in this chapter.

Technology-based activities

New technology creates new possibilities for getting learners more actively engaged in the learning process. For example, Randell (2015) identifies three broad categories of activities and suggests technology-based approaches that can be used: for example, to build comprehension, a teacher might make use of a digital quiz; to develop critical thinking, a teacher might make use of web-quests and decision-making trees; and to develop skills, a teacher might make use of games and e-portfolios.

Technology then enables certain kinds of learning activities, such as computer-marked quizzes or blogs which learners write and then have peers comment on. Another example is wikis or related applications, such as Google Docs (free web-based software), which enable learners to contribute to a collaboratively developed text on which they can provide one another with feedback in the process. In these examples, the technology suggests the activity. More often, however, teachers know what kind of activity they wish learners to do and then they have to identify an appropriate technology to help them to do so.

Activity-based uses of technology

There are many ways in which technology can be used to support more constructivist approaches in language classrooms generally and in multilingual environments, including:

- Extending learning opportunities beyond the physical constraints of the classroom by using 'flipped' classroom approaches;
- Promoting inclusion and reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity by accessing and exploring multiple resources developed in multiple contexts using multiple languages;
- Encouraging learners to showcase and share their language work, usually with positive motivational effects and raised self-esteem;
- Creating, or sourcing and editing, digital resources such as radio and television programmes (both popular and education-oriented), online newspapers, webcasts, podcasts, newsrooms, video clips or even video sharing through websites such as YouTube;
- Creating learning videos, which learners can watch at home in their own time, at their own pace and with possibilities for rewinding parts they found difficult and fast-forwarding through parts they easily mastered;
- Identifying and correcting errors quickly and easily in a word-processing programme and thus encouraging experimentation and the recognition that we learn by making mistakes and then not repeating them;
- Accessing current information relating to linguistic and cultural diversity;
- Using digital tools and project- and problem-based approaches to encourage learner independence and interdependence;
- Using online conferencing applications, e-mail, LANS, chats, texts and/or microblogging and other tools to encourage engagement between learners (and teachers) in different classroom, schools, regions or countries;
- Using online applications to provide both automated and teacher-initiated personalised feedback on assessment activities, making use of applications such as automated speech recognition (ASR) and automated writing evaluation (AWE);
- Making content available in several media — audio, video, multimedia mashups, authentic contexts, and real-world experiences to help language learners with different learning styles to engage with the content according to their preferences;
- Using multimedia to bring paper-based language storybooks to life;
- Using online translation facilities and multilingual dictionaries to facilitate understanding and build bridges between languages (while recognising there is often a need for editing to ensure accurate use of the target language);
- Using ICTs to avail access to learners who must study outside normal hours because they live in remote areas or have special needs;
- Using tablets or phablets to replace paper worksheets and assessment questionnaires or using Rosetta Stone software to create an individual-based virtual language laboratory;

- Encouraging learners to become creators and not merely consumers of language content by finding and adapting or creating their own multimodal resources;
- Setting up differentiated team projects, freeing the teacher to support rather than to deliver content and repeat instructions;
- Encouraging active collaboration and greater attention to audience, form and task through setting Wiki or Google Docs or other web-based word-processing assignments;
- Creating opportunities for learners to record their own speech to self-assess and also to receive feedback from more capable others;
- Involving learners in digital storytelling;
- Supporting teams of learners to collaborate on the development of language-based video games;
- Creating bots to support routine language drills through applications such as Chattypeople.com, Botsify.com and Robot.me;
- Creating language-learning-based virtual reality environments (Rodesiler & Pace, 2013; Carhill-Poza 2017; Imhonopi et al, 2017; Kessler 2018).

As Wang (2014) observes, it is then not so much about *what* technology we use but rather *how* we use it to empower students to continue to develop their language skills outside of the limited time spent in the classroom. In a similar vein, Akiyama and Saito (2016) found that while students were able to gain *some* language skills during collaborative teleconferencing sessions, development of *fluency* required more extensive exposure outside of these sessions.

Technology to address specific learning needs

Support is needed for specific speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, but also for developing more comprehensive notions of multiliteracy in a multicultural, multimodal digital era (Carhill-Poza, 2017). Different learners may need different kinds of support at different times. However, learners may also experience a variety of barriers to their language learning, such as visual or aural impairment. Technology can then also be used to help make classrooms more inclusive. This is an area of practice which has come to be called 'assistive technology' and encompasses the use of technology to assist, adapt or rehabilitate to help overcome a variety of possible barriers to learning (Wikipedia, 2017; Understood, n.d.). Possible uses of technology for this purpose are neatly summarised by Boskic et al (2008: 158).

An increasing variety of free and proprietary applications are available to assist language learning. For example, visually impaired learners, as well as those learners who prefer not to work with text, may make use of appropriate text-to-speech software such as JAWS, NVDA, Ivona, NaturalReader, Zabaware Text-to-Speech Reader, iSpeech, Acapela Group Virtual Speaker, TextSpeech Pro, AudioBookMaker, TextAloud 3, Read The Words, Voice Reader 15, Microsoft text-

to-speech voices or something similar. For those still preferring to work on-screen, ZoomText enables quality magnification.

Those working on mobile devices might consider activating the TalkBack function in Android or the VoiceOver function in Apple.

More generally, a relatively new and potentially disruptive form of technology is open educational resources.

Open educational resources (OERs)

Increasingly, useful resources from outside of the school are available in a digital format, but copyright restrictions may sometimes prevent teachers from making use of these resources. Just because something is available on the internet does not mean that teachers have the right to share it or make changes to it. In fact, in terms of the Berne Convention, unless it is specifically indicated otherwise, teachers must assume that things they find on the internet are protected by 'all rights reserved' copyright. This means that they must ask permission to use them with others, explain how they want to use them and possibly even pay a royalty fee. This challenge has given rise to new kinds of resources called open educational resources (OERs).

OERs are resources that have been created for educational purposes and which exist in the public domain or are shared under a licence that clarifies how the resource may be used, without needing to ask for further permission or to pay any kind of royalty.

The most commonly used licensing system in education is the 'Creative Commons' (see https://creativecommons.org/).

This issue is explored through the following practical examples.

Here is a resource (photography by author):

Figure 10.1: A resource

Obviously, this resource could be used in many ways, for example, on a greeting card, in a calendar, as wrapping paper, in a textbook and so on.

Here is the same photograph as part of an educational resource:

Figure 10.2: An educational resource

This photograph has become an educational resource because a teacher has added an activity to it. Now, another teacher might not like the activity and want to change it. But can they do this? As it stands, the teacher would first need to ask for permission to do this.

The following is the same resource as an open educational resource (OER).

Figure 10.3: An OER

The inclusion of an open licence makes the educational resource an open educational resource (OER). The open licence that has been applied allows a teacher to do the following:

- Think of a story in which a cat is the main character.
- Tell one another the story you have thought of.
- Now discuss:
  - What human characteristics are associated with particular kinds of animals and with cats in general?
  - Do different cultures associate different characteristics?

This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0
Citation: Jane Kamau 2018
Photo: Tony Mays 2011

Figure 10.4: A revised OER

The licence tells the teacher that they can use and make changes to the original work, provided they acknowledge the original source.

Thus, more open licences create an opportunity for teachers to take high quality resources and change them for a better fit with the language learning needs of a specific classroom. Wiley (2014) identifies five rights associated with a resource being openly licensed:
1. Reuse: to use the resource unchanged;
2. Revise: to alter or transform the resource;
3. Remix: to combine the work (unchanged or altered) with other resources;
4. Redistribute: to share the original resource, the reworked resource or the remixed resource with others;
5. Retain: to be able to retain a copy of the resource (Wiley 2014).

Exercise of these 'rights' enables new kinds of activities, such as mixing together language resources from different sources or taking an existing resource and translating it into another language.

Examples of OERs in support of technology-enhanced multilingual teaching and learning

The author undertook a search of OER websites with explicit or implicit reference specifically to language learning and/or integration of technology into classroom teaching in South or sub-Saharan Africa and identified the following websites as being particularly useful:

• African Storybook (ASb)
• Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA)
• Notesmaster
• OER4Schools Professional Learning Resource
• Siyavula
• VUMA! Skills Portal
• Thutong
• African Virtual University (AVU)
• OER Africa.

It was noted that despite the first two examples above, much of the OER content that would be immediately useful to teachers in South and southern Africa exists in English. It might then be useful to explore crowd-sourcing translation of some of these materials into other languages, as exemplified by the 16 000 volunteers of the TED Translators initiative (De la Fuente & Comas-Quinn, 2016). The same process of crowd-sourcing might also be a way to nurture the development of new OER related specifically to language teaching in multilingual contexts.

African Storybook (ASb)

http://www.africanstorybook.org/ (Accessed 26 May 2019)

The African Storybook is an initiative of Saide, which is funded by Comic Relief. It promotes the development and sharing of storybooks for children in multiple languages. The ASb site helps teachers to *access* storybooks for younger children, to *make* such books (either as completely new publications or by adapting and/or translating from another language) and provides guidelines for how to *use* them in the classroom. When the site was visited while writing this chapter, there were 899 storybooks in 133 languages and there had been 4 072 translations.

A presentation on the design approach for the African Storybook website and app won Best Paper at ED-MEDIA 2017.

In a mid-term review of this initiative, the reviewers observed that the use of the storybooks had encouraged the use of a more activity-based pedagogy (Janks & Harley, 2015).

Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA)

http://www.tessafrica.net/ (Accessed 26 May 2019)

Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) is an initiative founded by the UK Open University to help teachers improve their practice as a teacher or teacher educator through collaborative development and sharing of lesson plans and resources. The site provides free, quality resources in English, French, Arabic and Swahili that support national school curricula and can help teachers to plan lessons that encourage the active engagement of learners.

Resources have been created to link with school curricula in Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Resources are available for Life Skills, Literacy, Numeracy, Science and Social Studies and the Arts at primary level, and for Science at the secondary level. In addition, the site provides several additional support resources to help teachers to use the TESSA OER more effectively.

A reflective review on the process and achievements of the initiative in 2009 identified the following important success factors for the integration of OER: accessibility to ICT (hardware, software, skills and connectivity), adequate resources (especially time for locating, adapting and integrating OER), support for teachers, accommodation of local cultural and institutional practices and sustainable funding (Thakrar, Wolfenden & Zinn, 2009).

Notesmaster

https://notesmaster.com/ (Accessed 26 May 2019)

Notesmaster is a platform that was custom-built to support collaborative development and sharing of teaching resources and methods linked to specific country school curricula. Teachers can sign up and select their country or region to gain access to the available curriculum-related resources. Teachers can then access and make use of already existing teaching and learning resources applicable to their own curriculum uploaded by other teachers, or access and adapt, or access resources from other countries and curricula and adapt/translate for local use or create and share new resources.

In 2015, the Notesmaster's initiative in Namibia was one of the winners of a World Summit Award.[1]

When the site was visited while writing this chapter, Notesmaster was working in 29 countries, had enabled the creation of 28 181 resources linked to 354 digital syllabuses and had reached 2 854 000 learners.

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1   http://oasis.col.org/bitstream/handle/11599/1743/201511_Connections_Vol20-No3.
    pdf (Accessed 26 May 2019)

OER4Schools Professional Learning Resource

http://oer.educ.cam.ac.uk/wiki/OER4Schools (Accessed 26 May 2019)

While focused on mathematics teaching, this resource includes guidelines for interactive teaching and technology-enhanced learning which might also be transferable to the language teaching context.

The former Centre for Commonwealth Education funded the OER4Schools project which was led by staff from the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. The first phase started in August 2009 and involved a pilot to explore the use of OERs and technology to enhance learning in classrooms in Zambian schools. The second phase started in June 2010, and drew on the outcomes of the pilot phase. This phase saw the development of the professional learning resource for which a link is provided above. The resource seeks to encourage the use of OERs and technology for more engaged and interactive teaching and learning. The third phase, which commenced in 2013, involved 35 teachers and about 1 000 learners. Subsequently, the resource has been adapted for use in other countries.

Reflection on the experience of implementing the OER4Schools project gave rise to the following general guidelines for implementing teacher development (including teacher development for language teachers) in the future: programmes need to be long-term because it takes time to change pedagogy; there is a need to develop teacher agency and leadership; there is a need to focus on classroom implementation to connect theory and practice; there is a need to create opportunities for collaboration with colleagues (within and outside workshops); and there is a need to draw on digital technology as a motivator for professional learning and pedagogic change (Hennessy, Haßler & Hofmann, 2015)

Siyavula

https://www.siyavula.com/ (Accessed 26 May 2019)

'Siyavula' is a Nguni word which means 'we are opening'. Formerly seeded by the Shuttleworth Foundation, Siyavula supports and encourages communities of teachers to work together, to openly share their teaching resources and benefit from the use of technology.

The website provides free access to open textbook content for Mathematics Grades 10 to 12, Mathematical Literacy Grade 10, Physical Sciences Grades 10 to 12, and Life Sciences Grade 10. Each chapter in each book ends with practice exercises and an icon to click for solutions. However, access to additional related practice exercises requires an account login and comes at a small fee. This example does not speak directly to multilingual language teaching content but is useful in providing a localised example of a freemium business model for OER in which access is provided to some content for free while additional content requires payment. It therefore represents a possible model to explore for a sustainable

engagement with creation, development and redevelopment of language teaching resources.

VUMA! Skills Zone Portal
https://elearn.wits.ac.za/home/default/news/Vumaskillzone (Accessed 26 May 2019)

The VUMA! Portal was created some years ago in recognition of the fact that many students entering higher education were not adequately prepared for independent higher learning, especially about academic literacy in English. The site therefore provides language/writing skills in the following areas: essay-writing process, structuring essays, analysing essay questions, creating essay outlines, structuring paragraphs, using direct quotations, plagiarism, referencing and citing basics, and APA and Harvard referencing. It also provides access to guidelines on other more general study skills, number skills, computer skills and life skills. The site has not been updated in recent years, but it is hard to imagine that students are any better prepared today than they were in the past and so it might be useful to revive this initiative. It is understood that such an initiative is currently in process at the University of the Free State.

Thutong
http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/ (Accessed 26 May 2019)

The Thutong portal is an initiative of the Department of Basic Education providing a space for the sharing of school curriculum resources.[2] While there are links to some resources that are still useful, including for language teaching, the site appears not to have been updated since 2016.

African Virtual University (AVU)
https://oer.avu.org/ (Accessed 26 May 2019)

The African Virtual University (AVU) seeks to harness the use of ICT to improve the quality of higher education in African universities.

The OER site at AVU has resources in English, French and Portuguese. It requires some patience to find resources on this site, with most success found by using the main search feature, but recent uploads that might be of interest to readers include:
- Climbing the Tower of Babel: ODELPD in multiple languages (policy brief) https://oer.avu.org/handle/123456789/560;
- Foreign language (guidelines to learning English, Portuguese or French as a foreign language) https://oer.avu.org/handle/123456789/518;
- Make what is hers mine: Cultural appropriation and contextualization of OERs (policy brief) https://oer.avu.org/handle/123456789/717.

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2   http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/tabid/243/Default.aspx (Accessed 26 May 2019)

In addition, at the time of visiting there were 314 resources exploring various aspects of technology integration.

OER Africa

http://www.oerafrica.org/ (Accessed 17 June 2019)

OER Africa promotes the use of OERs by African institutions and provides examples of OERs developed by African institutions. It is an initiative of Saide that has been running since 2008. The landing page is useful for providing information on recent developments in OERs, while a tab on the home page leads to a wealth of resources aimed at helping users to gain an understanding of OERs.

Clicking on the tab for African OER courseware takes the reader to a sub-menu through which the user can browse topics related to agriculture, foundation studies, health or teacher education. The sub-menus of foundation studies and teacher education are the ones most likely to be of interest to readers of this chapter.

An alternative to visiting specific sites, like the above, is to undertake an advanced search. For example, one can try an advanced search in Google using the search term 'multilingualism' and usage rights 'free to use, share or modify, even commercially' to find openly licensed articles, discussion documents, policy documents and course materials.

In addition to the specific websites discussed above, Barker and Campbell (2016) identify a number of other online applications, which could prove useful in the search for resources for the multilingual and multicultural classroom.

Some general guidelines for the use of technology in the multilingual classroom

Experience suggests that teachers may require not only additional support in how to select and use appropriate technology for the multilingual context, but also perhaps more fundamental support for selecting appropriate contextually responsive language teaching methods to inform their use of the technology (Nhongo et al, 2017; Ooyo, 2017). It is worth noting that mainstream experience in higher education has tended to see the use of technology to perpetuate and scale existing pedagogy rather than to exploit the potential of new technology to change practice (Bates & Sangrà, 2011; Prinsloo & Sasman, 2015). Whether or not technology will have a positive impact on changed ways of learning and teaching will then depend on how the individual teacher chooses to use it (Bates, 2015; Segoe & Mays, 2017; Bates, 2018).

It is thus not just about deciding what technology to use but rather helping teachers to develop technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK)—not only making informed decisions about *what* language issues to address, but also *how* to teach that content, and then using *appropriate technology appropriately* for learning purpose and context (Shulman, 1986; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Glennie & Mays, 2013; UNESCO, 2013).

The choice of appropriate technology relates both to technology tools that can be used to elicit language content and self-reflection, such as surveys, blogs and e-journals, as well as assessing the process of developing language competences by, for example, tracking eye movements while reading (Marijuan & Sanz, 2017).

This suggests the need to revisit the ways in which universities and colleges prepare teachers during their initial (and continuing professional) development so that through direct experience of different literacy events and practices using digital technology and media, they can carry over personal experience into their own classrooms (Rodesiler & Pace, 2013; Mays, 2017a; Kessler, 2018). However, teacher-educators first need to be cognisant of and proactively address those factors that might make teacher-educators reluctant to integrate technology into their own language teaching (Kazemi & Narafshan, 2014) and to guide institutional leaders in how best to manage and enhance their ICT resources (Bialobrzeska & Cohen, 2005).

Conclusion

Multilingual classrooms have become the norm rather than the exception in urban settings. Technology can be used to access and adopt or adapt a wider range of openly-licensed learning resources in a wider range of languages. It can also be used during the process of teaching and learning to foster more constructivist collaborative language learning and to address barriers to learning. However, there is a need to support teachers and education managers in the appropriate use of suitable technologies for purpose.

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SECTION III

Legislative and policy frameworks guiding multilingualism in education settings

CHAPTER 11

South Africa's language identity struggle in education: The historical factor

Kolawole Samuel Adeyemo & Ophélie RL Dangbégnon

Introduction

Language and identity are so tightly interwoven that one characteristic of language use is sufficient to correctly identify a person's membership of a particular group (Tabouret-Keller, 1997: 317). Consequently, language does more than just create a person's identity; it also allows for the identification of a speaker's social group (Gumperz, 1982: 239). This is easily illustrated by looking at South Africa where, historically, languages were used as tools of empowerment and discrimination to facilitate an ideology of oppression against all people who were not white (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 248). Indeed, throughout the history of South Africa, language has been controlled and handled instrumentally (De Kadt, 2005). English and Afrikaans have, consecutively, been foisted upon black South Africans as official languages and further reinforced by their continued use in education and for research purposes, thus leading to the advancement of these languages and the depreciation of others.

Hegemonic ideologies of this type often lead to symbolic domination in institutional practices, such as education (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004: 254). As a result, strong opinions are often expressed in the debates on language, especially when assigning prestige and status to a language. In turn, these opinions often reflect a group's sentiments with regard to society and culture. Unfortunately, indigenous African languages (IALs) have been viewed negatively by Africans themselves. This negative attitude is said to be engrained in a terror of social change experienced by the post-colonial elite (Obanya, 1999: 89–90). It is feared that minority groups will obtain a greater status through the official recognition of their language and, thereby, threaten the rule of the elite. With the struggle related to the language issue comes a struggle for control and power (Ngũgĩ, 1986: 4). In terms of their power, languages do not only allow people to communicate but they also act as influential cultural or linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1993: 45).

In South Africa, English has achieved a high level of cultural/linguistic capital as a result of its global hegemony, as well as its status as the language of the British colonisers. For this reason, English is said to facilitate a better chance of upward mobility and prosperity. Bourdieu (1993) believes that once a language has achieved official status, it is said to have great linguistic capital as it will, most likely, be used in the spheres of education, economy and politics. However, Bourdieu's notion does not apply to the South African context — although South Africa has 11 official languages (actually 12, with South African Sign Language having been recognised as a home language in the school curriculum), one cannot suggest that they all enjoy the benefits or the cultural capital associated with official languages (Alexander, 2011). This is evident in the language situation in the country, where English is considered to be the ruling language in trade, industry and education, and is seen as being indispensable for economic emancipation by numerous indigenous African language speakers (De Wet, 2002: 120) — despite the fact that only a small portion of the population is functionally literate in English (Kaschula & De Vries, 2000: 3).

According to the South Africa Demographics Profile of 2018, only 9.6 per cent of South Africa's population has English as a home language (IndexMundi, 2018). However, English is widely used in the South African education system (Department of Basic Education, 2010) and, hence, promotes its cultural hegemony. Moreover, parents from rural areas seem to regard English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and as being beneficial to their children to enable them to compete on a global stage (Hugo, 2010). Hence, English as the LoLT is seen by black parents as an opportunity to achieve upward social and financial mobility. Due to its negative effects on education in the IALs and learners' academic performance, several scholars (such as Neville Alexander, Kathleen Heugh and Kwesi Prah, among others) and language practitioners have explored the issue of English dominance in the education sector. In striving to comprehend this hegemony and to promote IALs, researchers have identified factors that could be responsible for sustaining it. Yet, after many years of scrutiny and the implementation of several policies, the future of education in IALs is no brighter and English is achieving an even higher status.

Accordingly, English dominance in the education sector is still an important issue in post-apartheid South Africa and the necessity to identify the indubitable reasons for this occurrence remains imperative. Therefore, new perspectives on the rationale behind English hegemony are still required. The relationship between English and IALs is one that is dichotomous in nature in that English possesses a more illustrious position in education compared to IALs (Alexander, 1999). Furthermore, scholars such as Webb and Kembo-Sure have labelled African communities as diglossic zones since 'in Africa the colonial languages have been put on a pedestal and can be characterized as High languages, whereas indigenous languages are Low languages' (Webb & Kembo-Sure, 2002: 104). Despite

constitutional provision, the nine official IALs — that is, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu (The Republic of South Africa, 1996) — do not enjoy the status promised them. In an attempt to remediate this situation, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) drafted the Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) policy in September 2013, with an aim to facilitate the advancement of IALs and to encourage their use by students at school and to boost parents' conviction that using their various indigenous languages in education can only be advantageous (DBE, 2013: 5).

Moreover, it is Kwesi Prah's opinion that due to the status enjoyed by 'languages of colonisation' — in our case English — these languages tend to be languages of education and literacy while IALs are reserved solely for informal situations (Prah, 2000; Webb & Kembo-Sure, 2002: 103).

In the context of education, several researchers cite positive outcomes when pupils learn in their preferred IAL. According to Prah (2000), 'all education of Africans should be done in the mother-tongue. It is in these languages that their genius is grounded … African languages will permit the masses to participate most effectively not only in knowledge reception but also in knowledge creation' (Prah, 2000: 72–80). This statement indirectly suggests that the hegemony of English in African education systems has a negative effect on learners' academic performance. According to the Global Competitiveness Index of 2017–2018, South Africa is 116th of 137 countries with regard to the quality of primary education and 114th in terms of the quality of its education system (Schwab, 2017: 269). Although there is clearly an improvement compared to previous years, this ranking is still relatively low and, therefore, demonstrates the need to further improve existing policies. The issue has been raised among education experts and reasons such as a lack of funds and ignorance of the education problem have been suggested. According to Mutasa (2006), even after more than 50 years since several African countries obtained independence from the British, the dominance of English is still heavily felt in African education and no concrete progress has been made in the education sector, despite the efforts of the continent's great scholars (Mutasa, 2006: 69). Therefore, a hiatus can be noticed in terms of the many research studies and their findings.

The indisputable and actual reasons behind English hegemony in the South African education sector have yet to be addressed. In post-apartheid South Africa, the ANC government has attempted to right the wrongs of the past by officially recognising nine IALs in a quest to promote equality in all official languages and to provide educational opportunities for all learners. However, its attempt to remedy the situation has been inadequate as even with their recognition as official languages, the status and cultural capital of IALs are gravely out of balance (Alexander, 2011) and English continues to dominate (Silva, 1997).

In this chapter, it is posited that giving official status to IALs is plausible in theory, but if these languages are not actually used for the benefit and enhancement of South African citizens in key sectors, this status becomes

pointless. An example of this futility can be seen in the fact that although measures have been taken to promote multilingualism and mother-tongue education, 80 per cent of schools use English as a medium of instruction (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017). In an attempt to build a new multicultural South Africa, the Constitution — drafted in 1996 — seeks to elevate the status of IALs. To promote this endeavour, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was created to help design and protect policies that contribute to the advancement of all languages. In addition, the Bill of Rights also makes provisions for all children to receive an education in the official language of their choice (The Republic of South Africa, 2002).

Nonetheless, the enforcement of the various reforms has proved to be difficult, despite the authorities' best intentions. The government's struggle to enforce and implement these rights is evident when investigating the issue of the LoLTs. The use of the home language or English as the language of instruction has been a controversial issue both in government and in the media. The Ministry of Education was empowered by the National Education Policy Act of 1996 (DBE, 2013: 7) to promote multilingualism and to protect South Africa's variety of cultures and languages. According to the Language in Education Policy, subsequently adopted in 1997, learners should be able to choose the language in which they prefer to be taught when applying to be admitted at a particular school. The principal objectives of the Language in Education Policy were to 'promote and develop all official languages and to support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used for religious purposes, languages which are important for international trade and communication, South African Sign Language as well as Alternative and Augmentative Communication' (Department of Education, 1997).

Although the DBE aims to promote the notion of pride in, and the use of, indigenous South African languages, the majority of schools across South Africa use English as the LoLT. According to a national sociolinguistic survey conducted by the PanSALB in 2002, 80 per cent of institutions use English as the language of tuition in the wider educational setting (Figone, 2012: 41). Furthermore, it was found that 'only 22 per cent fully understand political, policy and administrative related speeches and statements made in English' (Figone, 2012: 42). Studies concerned with educational performance have traditionally focused on the lack of funds and resources and teacher qualifications — among other topics. Although many South African scholars and those from other parts of Africa have attempted to contest the hegemony of English in the education sector based on its socio-economic benefits, they appear not to have highlighted the role of language history, as well as the South African educational history, as a contributing factor in parents' choices of the LoLT for their children's education. In terms of the previously cited reasons, this study seeks to investigate the reasons for the dominance of English in the South African education sector in the hope of empowering parents and school governing bodies (SGBs) to make informed and rational decisions in their choice

of the LoLT. In this chapter, the history of language and the language of education in South Africa are explored; the advantages and disadvantages associated with both English and mother-tongue education are examined; and the influence of South African language history on the choice of LoLT is determined.

The history of language education in South Africa

Language is one of the most important components of culture (Brothy, 2012). Through language, culture can be defined, shaped and eventually handed down to the next generation. Language and culture are so intertwined that different changes experienced by a culture can be detected in the transformation of the language associated with it. Moreover, language is an essential part of being since it is an exclusively human attribute, which allows people to communicate and, therefore, distinguishes them from animals (Brothy, 2012). The importance of language and cultural rights is addressed by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of UNESCO, which states that:

> Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, values systems, traditions and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001).

Likewise, the aims and objectives of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, as described in Section 185 of the South African Constitution (The Republic of South Africa, 2002) are to:

> Promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities; to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association; and to recommend the establishment or recognition, in accordance with national legislation, of a cultural or other council or councils for a community or communities in South Africa.

Over and above the rights stipulated by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of UNESCO and the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, the significance of language and literacy for the development of a society needs to be recognised. As reported by Prah (2007), a community cannot evolve to 'modernity if the language of literacy and education are only within the boundary of the small minority' (Prah, 2007: 4). The aims and objectives of the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities clearly indicate that the post-apartheid Constitution of South Africa addresses the issue of language. The language issue is sensitive in nature and, therefore, has been

intensely debated in the new South Africa. Formerly, this debate had been held between only two linguistic groups: the English and Afrikaans communities. The clashes between the two languages as well as between IALs can still be felt today as preference is given to a particular language to the detriment of others — despite recently published statistics. According to the mid-year population estimates conducted by Statistics South Africa in 2018, there are 57.73 million people in South Africa (Stats SA, 2018). Furthermore, the most recent census held in 2011 (with the next one planned for 2021) revealed that the mother tongue of 22.7 per cent of South Africans is isiZulu, followed by isiXhosa at 16 per cent, Afrikaans at 13.5 per cent, English at 9.6 per cent, Setswana at 8 per cent and, finally, Sesotho at 7.6 per cent (IndexMundi, 2018). Despite the low number of mother-tongue speakers, English is held in high regard by all its users due to the widespread belief that English is the key for a brighter future. Moreover, the geographical distribution of English is more extensive than the 10 other official languages; the bulk of its speakers can be found in urban areas (Kamwangamalu, 2007: 264–265).

The linguistic tension between speakers of Afrikaans and English is one that has lasted many decades. There is a continuous fight for control, especially when it comes to the LoLT. Comprehending the language issue in the current education system means taking cognisance of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid-based education, and to understand the existing language dynamic, one has to delve into South Africa's language history in an attempt to explicate the hegemonic power of certain languages over others. Setting a well-founded basis for all subsequent discussion regarding issues associated with the theme of language and education in a post-apartheid South Africa initially requires a discussion of the power struggle between Afrikaans and English and its effect on black South Africans.

The lack of unity between South Africa's different language groups can be seen to have taken place over a long period of time; white hegemony can be traced back to colonial times — before the advent of the apartheid era. The domination and subjection experienced by black South Africans changed from being a standard occurrence in society to being a regulated structure under the apartheid government. During this time, language was not only a differentiating trait but also an instrument of discrimination, segregation and separation.

Portuguese seafarers were the first Europeans to arrive in southern Africa as their ships used the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope (Theal, 1896: 76). In 1652, the Dutch East India Company established a settlement near Table Bay where it constructed a fort and set about replenishing its fleet with fresh food supplies (Mesthrie, 2002: 14). This Dutch colony soon expanded and became relatively autonomous. From 1652 to 1795, the Cape of Good Hope was occupied and then colonised by Dutch settlers. A knowledge of Dutch, which later evolved into Afrikaans, was essential for access to resources as well as employment until the Cape fell under the control of the British in 1795 (Kamwangamalu, 2002: 1). Although they briefly relinquished the Cape back to the Dutch for about three

years, the British took over once more in 1806 to ward off the French. In 1814, the Cape of Good Hope was decreed a British colony (Brachin, 1985: 129), which ultimately led to increased tensions between the Dutch- and English-speaking communities and fuelled the development of Afrikaans in apartheid South Africa. It was the objective of the British to create a society that was completely their own and, to achieve this, they proceeded to 'Anglicise' the territory. In the words of Rodney Davenport: 'Anglicisation sought to replace Dutch with English in all spheres of public life' (Davenport, 1991: 40).

The first instance of complete segregation of indigenous groups in South Africa occurred before apartheid when the British drove the Xhosa off their lands and took over the land for farming. The success of the British in controlling southern Africa, coupled with their inability to fit in with their fellow white colonists, created a rift between them. The British granted access to all resources to speakers of English which caused the Dutch-speaking Boer population to make a point of differentiating themselves in terms of language and referring to themselves as 'Afrikaners' since they considered themselves to be natives of Africa — unlike the British (Mesthrie, 2002: 17). Because of their dissatisfaction with British rule, the Afrikaners migrated east and north in what was called the Great Trek. As Afrikaners moved to what is today known as KwaZulu-Natal, black African rulers appealed to the British to protect them, which marked the beginning of British indirect rule on the African continent (Gilmour, 2006: 129). British 'protection' involved relocating Africans to specific sites called 'locations' and separating them from the white population (Gilmour, 2006: 127). Subsequently, the British proceeded to assert their hegemony by exercising a form of cultural control via missionary education (Ngũgĩ, 1986: 9). During its supremacy, English was the official language of the colonies; it was used as the medium of instruction in schools and in all official documents.

The missionaries in Africa acknowledged the fact that preaching the word of God to Africans required them to learn the various indigenous languages (Gilmour, 2006: 54–64). After their arrival in modern-day KwaZulu-Natal to protect the indigenous population, the British missionaries proceeded to study the Zulu language extensively. Variations in isiZulu were recognised, but a specific form of isiZulu associated with the upper class or elite was considered the best one to use for evangelical purposes (Gilmour, 2006: 121). As a result, other variants of isiZulu, as well as other African languages, were deemed inferior. According to Alexander (2003), Zulu students are still conscious of the inferior status previously given to African languages as they attempt to detach themselves from their 'inferior' language/culture and seek greater achievement and prosperity by using the English language (Alexander, 2003: 96).

From the 1840s to the 1890s the British were actively involved in conquering southern Africa (Daniel, 2011). It was during this time that the Afrikaner nationalist movement began to prosper and with that came the creation of the

Society of True Afrikaners on 14 August 1875. According to SJ du Toit, one of the movement's founding fathers, the objective of the society was to protect 'our language, our nation and our land'. Galvanised by their sense of pride, the Afrikaners rebelled against the British hegemony and started trading with Germany (Thompson, 2001: 135–139). The strain between all the ethnic groups, aggravated by the imposition of English on the Afrikaner populace, inevitably led to the Anglo-Boer War (also known as the South African War), which lasted from 1899 to 1902, during which many black South Africans died. Although they won the war, the British did not achieve the expected outcome, which was to extinguish Afrikaner nationalism. Instead, the Afrikaners became even more nationalistic and proclaimed their difference and their fate to govern South Africa and 'its heathens' (Thompson, 2001: 135). Contrary to what they expected after the open criticism by Britain of the treatment that Africans suffered at the hands of the Afrikaners, Africans saw their movements further limited after the war (Coffi, 2017: 18).

It was always the objective of the British to unify their colonies in South Africa (Thompson, 2001: 148). The imperial government, therefore, approved the unification of all colonies in 1910 and English as well as Dutch became the official languages of the new united South Africa (Mesthrie, 2002: 18). However, IALs were not considered since their speakers were not seen as members of the colonies. Despite the ever-growing tensions between the British and Afrikaners, they came to the mutual agreement that black South Africans were inferior and, therefore, had no right to any formal education, leaving it to the missionaries to provide an education for black students.

In 1925, Afrikaans became an official language, replacing Dutch. Although the country was officially unified, in reality it was anything but united. The Afrikaners saw themselves as having been previously oppressed and proceeded to impose their hegemony by oppressing black people (Coffi, 2017: 18). Unfortunately, in order to thrive, the white population relied heavily on the poverty of black people and so, by 1939, only about 30 per cent of black children attended school (Thompson, 2001: 164). Subsequently, 1948 saw the advent of apartheid, which was a strict form of discrimination and seclusion, entrenched in racial difference. Under this regime, the education system underwent a total metamorphosis; it became mandatory for all white children to participate in public education, using English or Afrikaans as the language of learning and teaching.

Before 1953, some black South Africans attended schools founded by religious organisations, where the quality of education was of a high standard, as it was the same as that provided for white South Africans. However, after the implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, all financial aid to religious schools was withdrawn, forcing religious orders to sell their schools to the government. Education was considered to be part of the whole apartheid system (Thobejane, 2013: 2) and a Bantu education system was put in place to force Africans into the

role of mere labourers in an apartheid society. To illustrate the previous point, HF Verwoerd, the architect of the Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953) said:

> *There is no place for* [the African] *in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. It is of no avail for him to receive a training, which has as its aim absorption in the European community* (Feinstein, 2005: 159).

Christian National Education (CNE), which stated that people's opportunities as well as their responsibilities were determined by their ethnic identity, was put in place. In 1959, the Extension of University Education Act prohibited existing higher education institutions, that is, universities, from accepting black students. In the Bantu education system, mother-tongue education was compulsory for the first eight years of schooling, while English and Afrikaans were taught as secondary languages (Mesthrie, 2002: 19). Although this policy seemed to follow the guidelines of the UNESCO declaration on mother-tongue education, it was simply a strategic method of dividing and separating black South Africans in order to better exert control over them (Reagan, 2001: 55). This regime was not only about controlling blacks politically but also culturally. The government oversaw ways in which the different languages were to develop and what messages were transmitted through those languages. To do so, a systematic standardisation of each African language took place and it was the role of language boards to design the curriculum to be taught in black schools, as well as instruct black people on how to speak their mother tongues properly (Bailey & Herbert, 2002: 66–67).

In pursuance of a tight grip on all cultural aspects associated with black people, the Afrikaner government sought to foist the use of Afrikaans as the LoLT on learners and, simultaneously, lower the standing of English by implementing the Afrikaans Medium Decree. The rationale behind this move was that lowering the status of mother tongues would ultimately demonstrate their inadequacy, while validating the fact that Afrikaans was the better language because of its use in the public sphere. Students strongly opposed this rule and a conflict ensued between the government and black pupils. On 16 June 1976, students rose up and marched in protest against the new decree. Unfortunately, they were met by the police who unmercifully opened fire on them in what is known today as the Soweto Uprising. After this tragic event, English emerged as the language of prosperity and freedom from apartheid and Afrikaans was associated with oppression, discrimination and the loss of dignity. From that point onwards, English continued to grow and exert its hegemony over the 10 African languages (Kamwangamalu, 2002: 2). This overview of South Africa's language history serves to explain the provenance of the English language and its relation to other South African languages to comprehend its dominant position in society today.

The hegemony of English in the South African school system

The spread of English was based on the enlargement and extension of the British Empire (Spichtinger, 2003). Moreover, according to Phillipson (1992), the British Empire sustained its rule through English language teaching (ELT). Contrary to the opinion expressed by David Crystal (1997:110), English was not just 'in the right place at the right time'. Instead, Phillipson (1992) proposes that the spread of English was pushed and promoted by a premeditated control of all social, intellectual, political and economic factors in order to 'legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources' (Phillipson, 1992: 47). The historic spread of English and its continued dominance — even in post-colonial settings — has been accomplished through what Phillipson terms 'linguistic imperialism'. Linguistic imperialism refers to the dominance affirmed and maintained by the enactment and perpetual re-establishment of elemental and cultural imparity between the English language and other languages, that is, dominant vs dominated cultures (Phillipson, 1992: 15). The re-enactment and reconstitution of cited inequalities is to be found in one of the key principles of linguistic imperialism: English education or language teaching.

In recent years, academics and language experts have started to see language as a probable factor that determines students' educational failure or success. According to Anne Johnson, 'the tongue spoken back in the 1300s only by the "low people" of England, as Robert of Gloucester put it at the time, has come a long way. It is now the global language' (Johnson, 2009: 131). Lewis et al (2016) maintain that there are approximately 339 million English mother-tongue speakers and about 603 million speakers of English as a second language across the world. Language experts and ethnographers have also predicted that more than half the world will become proficient in English by 2050. According to Jiang (2011), globally the language of politics, communication, trade and commerce is English. Former conservative or traditional countries, such as China and India, have readily accepted English as a global lingua franca. These staggering numbers have undoubtedly encouraged researchers to explore the reasons behind the quick spread of English. Undoubtedly, English is seen and heard everywhere around the world — in schools, in the media and on the internet. South Africa has not escaped this — people are becoming westernised, which inevitably helps the promotion of English in the country (Memela, 2011). As such, the Ministry of Education was empowered by the National Education Policy Act of 1996 to promote multilingualism and to protect South Africa's varied cultures and languages, (DBE, 2013: 7).

According to the Language in Education Policy (LiEP), adopted in 1997, pupils should be able to choose the language in which they prefer to be taught when applying to a particular school (DBE, 1997: 3). However, the enforcement of this policy has proved to be difficult. Despite the government's best intentions, most parents, especially black South Africans, prefer their children to learn and

to be taught in English instead of their mother tongue or home language from primary school level.

Professor Jonathan Jansen is one of the academics who suggest that educators introduce English from Grade 1 as the LoLT. He believes that English should be introduced as early as possible for children to become fluent (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013: 2). In a similar vein, certain schools have opted for English as the LoLT from Grade 1. The introduction of English in Grade 1 or the 'immersion model' has also been prescribed by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) of the DBE (2011). The principles of the immersion model suggest that mother-tongue instruction inevitably delays the acquisition of English. This is supported by the 'critical-age hypothesis', which states that acquiring a language should be done during a specific period of a child's life when full native competence is achievable.

At the other end of the spectrum, using English as the LoLT in a country such as South Africa may have several disadvantages. Phillipson suggests that the benefits that may stem from the use of English — which is seen as an intrusive and imperialist language — are not clear-cut and thus those supporting the spread of English should consider the link between its use and social, educational disparity (Phillipson, 2008: 10). The use of English as a medium of instruction (MoI) for African learners, who do not speak English as their first language (L1), will anglicise them to the detriment of their cultural identity (Matsela, 1995: 50). In addition, speakers of IALs who attend English-medium schools with learners who have English as a L1 do not perform as well as the native speakers of English and, as a result, this leads to high dropout rates (Dalvit, Murray & Terzoli, 2009). Moreover, Visagie (2010) maintains that 'English as the LoLT poses a possible threat of us neglecting our other ten official languages and their associated cultures and traditions'.

Nevertheless, it is the researchers' belief that the socio-economic advantages listed by other academics are not a sufficient incentive for parents' choice of English. Firstly, although researchers have stated that full functional literacy in English ensures upward mobility (Webb & Kembo-Sure, 2002), statistics provided by the World Bank prove otherwise. According to Statistics South Africa, the unemployment rate in South Africa was about 26.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2018 (StatsSA, 2018). A report compiled by the World Bank states that 'South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world … South Africa's levels of inequality reflect its polarized society, with a small elite, a large class of poor people, and a relatively small middle class' (World Bank, 2018: 24–26). Van der Berg et al (2011) suggest that the quality of the South African education system indicates that an increase in years of schooling is not supplying the labour market with the skills needed. In other words, our education system has not equipped young people for the labour market. In its 2012 report titled *South Africa economic update: Focus on inequality of opportunity* and again in a report called *South Africa*

economic update: Jobs and South Africa's changing demographics, the World Bank proposes that:

> *The greatest priority on the supply side is to improve levels of educational attainment in South Africa. Getting basic schooling right is the first step to ensuring that school leavers and graduates have the foundational skills necessary to function in the modern workplace. Educational attainment not only shapes employment opportunities, but also provides the foundation for further on-the-job learning and training. This will not be an easy task. South Africa has already achieved almost universal school attendance and the challenge now is to improve learning outcomes by better training and support of teachers* (World Bank, 2015: 47–48).

In addition, in a newsletter, the Government Communication and Information System Department attests to the fact that previous lack of investment in African education has engendered today's excess of untrained postulants and inadequately trained job applicants (GCIS, 2014).

What's more, the absence of investments and learning materials in IALs are some of the reasons given as contributing to the choice of English as the LoLT. It is not plausible to say that there is a lack of funds when South Africa is the highest-ranking country in sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index (Schwab, 2017). Also, according to the 2018 national expenditure, the DBE has been allocated R246.8 billion. Recent policies suggest that DBE workbooks are available in all official languages for both Home and First Additional Language levels; that textbooks and readers are available in all official languages; and that teachers will be made available to teach the African languages (DBE, 2013: 13–14). Besides the workbooks, educational content and service providers, such as Macmillan Education, South Africa, provide materials for all grades, in all official languages and for all major subjects, including literacy. Jointly, this structure also provides teacher training on their Macmillan teacher campus.

Concerns about not being able to use an African language as the LoLT are unfounded since research on language development has shown that language can be developed through its use. Across Africa, there are several instances where IALs are used for educational purposes. For example, in Senegal, an organisation called Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED) publishes mostly in a local language, Pulaar, to respect and preserve the community's culture in terms of literature (Ouane & Glanz, 2010: 23). Another case can be found in Somalia, where Somali was standardised, an official alphabet based on the Latin script was adopted and the Somali terminology was expanded for formal education. After this development, Somali was used as the medium of instruction up to year 12 in formal education (Ouane & Glanz, 2010: 23–24). According to

Griefenow-Mewis (2004), Somali's example demonstrates that a relevant and dependable language policy and the conviction that African languages can be used in every way possible are key elements for success. Furthermore, IAL experts are available, as can be seen in the Department of Arts and Culture's project, The Reprint of South African Classics in Indigenous Languages, where books that are regarded as literary classics were identified and reprinted in the nine South African indigenous languages (National Library of South Africa, 2013).

What's more, it is important to acknowledge that the Department of Basic Education is making great advances in its implementation of the IIAL strategy. Indeed, one of the main objectives of this policy is to achieve social cohesion among South Africa's various language groups. According to a relatively recent progress report presented by the Department of Basic Education to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education (Maboya, 2017), much progress has been made since the inception of the policy. Prior to its implementation, 3 558 schools did not offer any formerly marginalised IALs (Department of Basic Education, 2016: 23). As of 2017, 27 per cent of these schools have enforced the incremental introduction of African languages, with Gauteng being at the forefront (Maboya, 2017). However, reasons such as a negative attitude towards IALs, insufficient funding and inadequate teacher capacity were listed as the cause of slow implementation of the IIAL policy in schools in all provinces. Furthermore, the Council of Education (CEM) ratified the incremental introduction of the IIAL from Grade 1 as of 2018 to Grade 12 in 2029. In addition, the Department of Basic Education announced that Kiswahili will be offered to learners as an optional second additional language from 2020, thus adding the African language to the list of non-official languages present in the National Curriculum Statement that are used as optional subjects. This move decisively aligns itself with the social cohesion aims of the IIAL policy and includes the African continent at large.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we argue that South Africans' preference for English goes beyond the obvious socio-economic advantages often cited by researchers. Instead, their choice lies in the history of language as well as that of language education in South Africa. We suggest that parents are unequivocally pro-English due to the past negative feelings, which they have internalised. At the height of apartheid, African languages were said to have no linguistic capital and to be inferior (Webb & Kembo-Sure, 2002: 183) and, therefore, it is hardly surprising that parents wanted better opportunities for their children. As previously discussed, the influence of colonial and apartheid language policies continue to be felt today and such policies explain the poor academic performance of African learners during their school careers.

Change is urgently needed and we believed that the following recommendations will assist in improving academic achievement and the educational system as a whole.

Thus, we recommend that parents are made aware of the role that language plays in the academic achievement or underperformance of their children. Because parents lack knowledge about the education process and are uninformed about issues pertaining to the development of language policy (Wolff, 2011), they often do not make choices that are educationally sound and beneficial for their children; instead they believe that English will enhance their chances of academic success and upward mobility. To remedy this situation, awareness campaigns should be organised throughout the country to inform South Africans about the vitality of learning in one's mother tongue and the role that this could play in the preservation of culture. Using the learner's mother tongue or home language as the LoLT will not only assist in changing parents' negatives perceptions about their languages, but also create an African-centred curriculum that is more relevant to the African context. Moreover, including a learner's language and culture in class activities will facilitate parents' participation in their children's education. Decision-making in the programme development process should involve parents and members of the community so that they can contribute to supporting the schools and even assisting in the development of materials. This will elevate schools to important positions within the community and assist in changing parents' attitudes from overrating the role of English as the LoLT to recognising the importance of IALs for the growth of education in South Africa. If this change is adopted and perpetuated, South African schools will produce proficient learners in both their mother tongue and English. Parents will come to realise that this method of instruction will ultimately lead to their children's successful participation in all relevant sectors of society, while preserving their cultural heritage.

It is therefore essential that South African language policies promote not only bilingualism, but also multilingualism and even polyglottism as the norm. Hence, the functioning of knowledge production and the distribution of African languages should be recognised if their linguistic capital and, in turn, their market value are to be relevant and the negative perceptions of IALs are to be disregarded. The purpose of this work is not to issue an ultimatum to choose sides — South Africans should not be forced to choose between English and IALs as the LoLT. Instead, we believe that recognising South Africa's social history as the main reason for today's preferred LoLT will allow all parties involved in education to develop policies that are pertinent in the new South Africa. We advocate that rendering IALs equal to English, and not replacing it, will offer a system that would meet the needs of a culturally, economically, linguistically, socially and politically developed South Africa.

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The daunting challenge of multilingual education policy in Zambia: Teachers' perceptions

Kenneth Kapalu Muzata

Introduction

Zambia is a highly multilingual society with more than 73 languages and dialects (Central Statistical Office, CSO, 2012). Since time immemorial, a mixed distribution of local languages has existed in Zambian towns and rural areas. For instance, in 1966, 49 per cent of the population was Nyanja, 20 per cent was Bemba, 11 per cent was Tonga, 5 per cent was Lozi and 15 per cent was from other groups. Luvale, Kaonde and Lunda were added to the original four after independence (Mwanakatwe, 2013). The 2010 census captured 61.9 per cent Nyanja, 17.6 per cent Bemba, 4.3 per cent Tonga, 0.2 per cent Kaonde and Luvale, respectively, 1.3 per cent Lozi, 1.2 per cent Nsenga, 0.4 per cent Tumbuka and percentages below 1 per cent for the other local languages in the city of Lusaka.

The language debate is usually an emotive one, the world over. From the missionary period to the colonial period, Northern Rhodesia is purported to have promoted teaching through the mother tongue. Linehan (2005: 2) says,

> the issue of language and education in Zambia was fairly straightforward throughout the colonial and much of the Federal period. From 1927, only three years after the Colonial Office took over the responsibility for what was then Northern Rhodesia up to 1963, just before the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the policy was consistent: mother tongue was used for the first two years of primary education, followed by a dominant vernacular up to Standard 5, and English thereafter.

This statement seems to indicate that even dialects were used. However, knowing how diverse the local languages were even then, it is not clear whether a mother

tongue was actually used to teach in all the schools in Northern Rhodesia. Mwanakatwe (2013) says that 'before independence, the colonial government selected four vernacular languages' (Cinyanja, Cibemba, Citonga and Silozi) as official languages for administrative purposes. Other local languages such as Ciluvale, Cilunda and Kikaonde and the many dialects were not included. While the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1977) reforms and recommendations noted the strengths of teaching through the mother tongue, impracticality related to language multiplicity of the Zambian people was noted to be a hindrance, especially in a highly mobile society where children moved with their parents from one language community to another. Other challenges that added to the impracticality of teaching in a mother tongue were the lack of proper teaching materials, limited reading materials and a lack of authorship in vernacular languages among Zambians. The lack of teachers to teach in the many local languages and the cost implications in terms of teaching and learning material development were also noted as challenges (Mwanakatwe, 2013). However, against all the many challenges of teaching in selected local languages, the Zambian curriculum framework 2013 reintroduced the familiar language of instruction (FLoI) from Grades 1 to 4.

Research on the language of instruction in Zambia

Several studies have been conducted on the language of instruction (LoI) before and after the birth of the 2013 curriculum. For instance, Mbewe (2015) showed two extreme contrasts of results from a study conducted to establish teachers', pupils' and parents' perceptions of the use of Cinyanja as a language of instruction. Mbewe (2015) found that while teachers supported the use of Cinyanja, learners and parents opted for English. Some parents said that Cibemba and Silozi should be used to teach their children instead of Cinyanja, which was not their native language despite being the FLoI in urban Lusaka. In a related study by Mkandawire (2017a), some parents blamed government for introducing the FLoI because they did not want their children to learn in any Zambian language. To Mkandawire (2017a), parents who blamed government for the new FLoI were totally misplaced. From a focus group qualitative study point of view, to interpret the parents' views as totally misplaced is to choose to ignore the actual problems and the parents' feelings, especially when dictated to follow a language policy with which they do not agree. Further studies have also indicated the impracticality of the FLoI in Zambia's education system.

From the studies on LoI in Table 12.1, it is clear that unfamiliar languages do not favour the education of those who are not familiar with the selected local languages being used for teaching. The FLoI being implemented in Zambia currently is a replica of the Language of Wider Communication Model. The difference is that seven Zambian local languages have been selected to be used for teaching and learning at lower primary school level. The basis for this selection is that the languages are familiar or widely used in particular zones, a concept

Table 12.1: Studies on LoI in Zambia

Researcher Year	Topic	Main result
Phiri, J. (2012)	Teachers' perception on factors which prevent some Grade 1 learners from breaking through to initial literacy	LoI, a barrier to a larger extent. Impacted on both learners and teachers, especially in urban and peri-urban areas due to multilingualism
Kumwenda, BC. (2011)	Initial reading performance in Cicewa in multi-ethnic classes: A case of selected basic schools in Chipata urban	Pupils to whom Cicewa was the first language performed better than those to whom Cicewa was not the first language
Zimba, S. (2007)	The effect of Nyanja as a language of initial literacy in predominantly Tumbuka-speaking area: The case of Lumezi District	Zonal languages as official languages have negative effects on initial literacy development in communities that speak a different language. Learners consistently performed below expectations in Cinyanja
Mubanga, V. (2012)	The effect of the use of Nyanja in the predominantly Soli-speaking area of Lwimba in Chongwe District	Learning in Cinyanja caused pupils to accumulate less vocabulary, sentence patterns and grammatical rules in Cinyanja itself, thereby restricting pupils' chances to ably express themselves
Kalindi, S. (2005)	The impact of the new Primary Reading Programme (PRP) on poor readers	Standard Cibemba was a barrier to initial literacy. The variety of Cibemba used in multi-ethnic/ multilingual classes was not the mother tongue or familiar language to a good number of pupils and hence they struggled to read

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Researcher Year	Topic	Main result
Njovu, B, Hamooya, C & Bwalya, T. (2013)	The challenges of teaching literacy skills in primary schools in Zambia	The use of unfamiliar languages in the initial teaching of literacy greatly affects the reading of children in schools in Kazungula where most people speak Silozi but Citonga is used, and in some parts of Kabwe where Cilenje is widely spoken but Cibemba is used.
Tambulukani, G & Bus, A. (2011)	Linguistic diversity: A contributory factor to reading problems in Zambian schools	Pupils make more progress in word reading fluency in a Zambian language and English when basic reading skills are practised in the children's most familiar Zambian language.

Source: Compiled by the author

very much related to the Language of Wider Communication Model — a model with its own weaknesses. This may not be peculiar to Zambia. In Nigeria, the language of wider communication (English) is favoured by parents, teachers and policy-makers, and parents send their children to schools where the language of wider communication is used, despite a national policy that the language of the environment should be used at lower grades. Thus, English still gains popularity because it is considered to be prominent and prestigious because it is the language of education, mass communication, politics, modern religion, medicines, science and technology (Babalola & Awodun, 2015).

Theoretical foundation

This chapter is linked to the popular Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development developed by Lev Vygotsky in the early twentieth century. We cannot discuss language in the absence of culture because culture and language define each other, and we cannot discuss teaching minus language because teaching is mediated by language, which is identical to culture. Kozulin et al (2003: 1) explain that, 'at the heart of Vygotsky's theory lies the understanding of human cognition and learning as social and cultural rather than individual phenomena'. Vygotsky's theory promotes respect for children's development from within their own culture, when he explored the relationship between language and thought, instruction and development. Each culture has its unique tools which help to transmit it to the next generation through children learning the tools of that culture. Beyond this, how

learning takes place and whether learning is effective or not, depends on whether the learner agrees with the psychological tools that mediate his or her learning. Thus, Kozulin et al (2003: 3) explain that,

> unlike the individualistic theory of learning, the Vygotskian approach emphasizes the importance of sociocultural forces in shaping the situation of a child's development and learning and points to the crucial role played by parents, teachers, peers, and the community in defining the types of interaction occurring between children and their environments.

Parents have a role to scaffold, to be models for learning, and learning must start from the base, 'the child's environment-culture'. Learning, according to Vygotsky, should therefore be defined from mediation and psychological tools.

The concept of mediation emphasises the role played by human and symbolic intermediaries placed between the individual learner and the material to be learned. Psychological tools are those symbolic systems specific for a given culture that when internalised by individual learners become their inner cognitive tools (Kozulin et al, 2003: 3).

Empirical research

This chapter is built on empirical research data supported by previous research and historical literature. In this study, four major questions were put to 147 Grades 1 to 4 teachers from four of the 10 provinces in Zambia implementing the FLoI in selected schools. Questions sought to find out respondents' preferred FLoI, spoken and written fluency in the FLoI, performance of learners after FLoI introduction and the challenges they encountered in teaching, using the FLoI. Thus the study adopted a mixed method approach driven by the quantitative approach. Data were collected by means of closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The open-ended questions mainly solicited explanations to some quantitative questions to represent qualitative data, while most analysis was quantitatively done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The chi-square test of goodness of fit was used to find differences and associations between data variables such as the language to which respondents belonged and the responses they gave.

Overview

This study, supported by other reviewed studies, argues that the current FLoI policy in Zambia is not multilingual-friendly. From the total sample of 147 respondents, 13 (8.8 per cent) were males and 120 (81.6 per cent) were females, while 14 did not indicate their gender. Although gender was not really a factor for data analysis, the results seem to suggest that there are more female teachers in town schools than male teachers. Most of the teachers that took part in this study were fairly

experienced: 60 (40.8 per cent) had above 11 years of teaching experience, 53 (36.1 per cent) had 6–11 years' experience, 22 (15 per cent) had 3–5 years' experience and 10 (6.8 per cent) had 1–2 years. The respondents' qualifications were equally encouraging—the majority of the participants had a diploma in primary teaching (62; 42.2 per cent). The Ministry of General Education (MoGE) has been phasing out the certificate qualification for primary school teachers in favour of a diploma as a minimum qualification. These results indicate that government's efforts are being realised. However, in this study, there were still 45 teachers (30.6 per cent) with certificates in primary school teaching; 24 (16.3 per cent) had secondary school diplomas and 15 (10.2 per cent) had degrees in primary school teaching. This random distribution demonstrates that the data were reliable because they were collected from a well-intended target group.

Language fluency among teachers

First, respondents were asked to tick their mother tongue and then to tick the other languages they could speak fluently. These two variables were cross tabulated and a chi-square test applied to see whether there were significant differences between their home languages and the other local languages in which they were fluent. Significant differences were established. The chi-square computation reflected (χ^2 (42, n = 144) = 5.86, p < 0.05). The results suggest that respondents were fluent in their mother tongues but not in the other local languages. Language fluency is very much related to mother tongue—this may not be debated. For instance, of the 37 Citonga mother-tongue speakers, 30 (81.1 per cent) said they were fluent in Citonga only, while seven (19 per cent) were fluent in four other local languages. Out of the 20 Cinyanja mother-tongue speakers that answered the question, 13 (65 per cent) said they were fluent in Cinyanja only, while seven (35 per cent) were fluent in three other local languages. All the Cibemba-speaking people (46) indicated that they were only fluent in Cibemba and not in any other local language. Although there were only nine Kikaonde-speaking teachers in this study, like the Cibemba-speakers, they were only fluent in Kikaonde. These teachers were teaching in different parts of the country where the language of instruction was not their mother tongue. Teachers are posted to teach anywhere in the country regardless of their native language (GRZ TS Form 2 regulation 37). The most encouraging part for multilingualism is the fact that the results show that some Cinyanja, Citonga, Silozi and Cilunda speakers were also fluent in languages other than their mother tongue. However, it's not possible to be fluent in all of the other six local languages declared as familiar languages of instruction. Even then, being more familiar with a local language other than one's mother tongue may signify loss of the latter, given that language proficiency is related to its regular use.

The aspect of language fluency was further investigated from reading and writing points of view. Respondents were asked whether they were able to read and write fluently and correctly in the FLoI used in the schools at which they were

teaching. The results indicated that the majority, 112 respondents (78 per cent) were fluent in reading and writing in the familiar language of instruction, while 32 (22 per cent) indicated that they were not able to read and write fluently in the FLoI. This raises questions about the quality of teaching by such teachers.

Teachers' choice of LoI

Teachers were asked what would be their choice of a LoI among the familiar local languages and English. The chi-square test results show a significant relationship at (χ^2 (49, n = 141) = 1.525, p < 0.05). Most teachers said they would choose to teach in their mother tongue. However, quite a number of teachers, 41 in total (33 per cent) also chose to teach in English. Thus, the results still showed a distribution of mother tongue speakers choosing other local languages as the LoI, an attitude that showed support for the FLoI, although the reason could be that they were brought up in communities where their local languages were not spoken. The following qualitative expressions support this analysis: 'I really grew up in a different area where my mother tongue or my language was not used.' Another said, 'I am not conversant with my mother tongue. I only know a bit of Cibemba and English.' These results communicate a very important message to curriculum developers and policy-makers in general. The results demonstrate a serious problem in deciding which language is best suited for teaching in Zambia. Mwanakatwe (2013: 203) noted:

> the selection of any one vernacular as a medium of instruction presupposes that teachers would be available in sufficient numbers throughout the country to teach effectively in the chosen vernacular, so that the much-needed uniformity is obtained. Such a supposition is definitely unrealistic.

Confidence to teach in the mother tongue

Confidence is a crucial factor in determining the qualities of a good teacher. When teachers were asked whether they were confident to teach in their mother tongue, not the familiar language, the chi-square results show no major significant differences at (χ^2 (7, n = 144) = 6.81, p > 0.05). In each mother tongue category, most teachers said they were more confident to teach in their mother tongue than in other familiar languages. The results demonstrated how comfortable they would be to express themselves in their mother tongue. The most familiar language for anyone is the mother tongue. A mother tongue is the first language for the child. It can be any dialect or language as long as it is the child's first language. Some children who are introduced to English as their first language make English their mother tongue. Ndeleki (2015: iv), in a study of the perceptions of the use of local languages as the medium of instruction (MoI) from Grades 1 to 4 in selected private schools, revealed that, 'schools located in Lusaka urban opted for English as

a MoI because it is the language commonly used in the homes of the children who are mostly foreigners and the elite Zambians'. Further, Ndeleki (2015: 52) reports that 'most informants from urban private schools claimed that English was the familiar language in the case of their private schools and that they had no problem with the reading levels of their pupils to justify this change of MoI'.

A very important point of reflection from Ndeleki's study is that Zambia is not isolated from the global village — its population includes foreigners and refugees. The local language policy can work well if it becomes more inclusive, taking care of the educational needs of vulnerable groups that are part of the global village. If the policy proposes the use of a local language as a FLoI, it technically suggests that foreigners have to put their children into private schools where international languages are used as the FLoI. This makes education expensive for some. The same predicament affects Zambians who transfer from one province to another, and there is a fear that private schools may be flooded. Eventually, the high standards of education that private schools boast about are likely to be watered down by the demands created by a poor language policy.

Teachers' views on whether the performance of learners has improved after FLoI implementation

Teachers were asked about their views on the performance of learners after the introduction of the FLoI. They were asked to rate the performance of those learners whose mother tongue was not the FLoI compared to those whose mother tongue was the FLoI. Although the majority of teachers rated the performance of learners as good (N = 64; 43.5 per cent) and (N = 9; 6.1 per cent) as very good, 59 (40.1 per cent) said learners' performance was average, 9 (6.1 per cent) said it was poor and 3 (2 per cent) said it was very poor. According to 64 teachers (43.5 per cent), learners' performance after the introduction of FLoI had improved, 44 (29.9 per cent) said that performance had gone down, while 30 (20.4 per cent) said it had remained the same. Teachers are aware of the impact of the new instructional policy. The teacher perceptions indicate that a considerable number of learners were still performing at average, poor and very poor levels even after the introduction of the FLoI. Similar perceptions have been documented:

> … *students from the dominant class stand a better chance of succeeding in school because they are usually more familiar with the cultural preferences of the school. Since, from an early stage, students from the lower and middle class are exposed to cultural codes different from the ones preferred by the schools, they find it very difficult to adjust to the school environment. Although in certain cases a small percentage of children from the lower class manage to adjust, the general view is that this disadvantage affects their educational attainment* (Hambulo, Haambokoma & Milingo 2012: 57).

No doubt it is the local language of the dominant class that is selected and imposed as the FLoI. The MESVTEE (2013b) National Assessment Report for 2012 also reported that 49 per cent of learners were not learning in their home language and cautioned the implementers to be careful when applying the new language policy. Tambulukani and Bus (2011) and Munsaka and Kalinde (2017), among other researchers, cautioned against the implementation of the FLoI in Zambia. There are many factors that determine academic achievement and it should not be assumed that language is the only factor. Making a policy to improve performance based on one factor is misleading. In the Zambian situation, to think teaching in a local language alone could improve academic achievement would be folly. The Zambian education system is faced with numerous challenges in the provision of quality education. These include a lack of teaching and learning materials, poor school infrastructure, poor exposure of children to a wide variety of learning options and opportunities, an uncoordinated curriculum, large classes and an uneven quality of teachers. While research indicates that instruction in a mother tongue aids academic achievement, the FLoI as implemented in its current form in Zambia does not reflect mother tongue instruction, thus disadvantaging many learners who are not native speakers of the FLoI.

Challenges of teaching in the FLoI

Figure 12.1 lists the numerous challenges affecting teaching and learning as a result of the FLoI policy. The challenges of using vernacular languages in highly multilingual societies such as Zambia are well documented in Mwanakatwe (2013). Mwanakatwe (2013: 206) notes:

> Learning through a multiplicity of languages presents the child with daunting difficulties which often retard progress. The plight of a child who is compelled to transfer from one school to another where a different vernacular language is used for instruction can be quite serious. A child's educational career can be ruined completely in such a situation.

Similarly, a teacher from Solwezi lamented, 'most of the pupils we have in this area come from the Copperbelt where they use Cibemba'. Solwezi is now the new mining town to which many Zambians have migrated in search of employment. A respondent wrote, 'being a mining town, a lot of people have moved to Solwezi; having a lot of different languages of children coming on transfer is a challenge'. The FLoI in Solwezi town schools and beyond is Kikaonde. In such an example, many children face language challenges before they settle, which frustrates their learning. Although children have the potential to learn a new language more easily than adults, their learning is frustrated at initial stages and they would not find help from their parents who may be aliens to the local language. Even if children can learn a language more quickly, the complexities of understanding from the
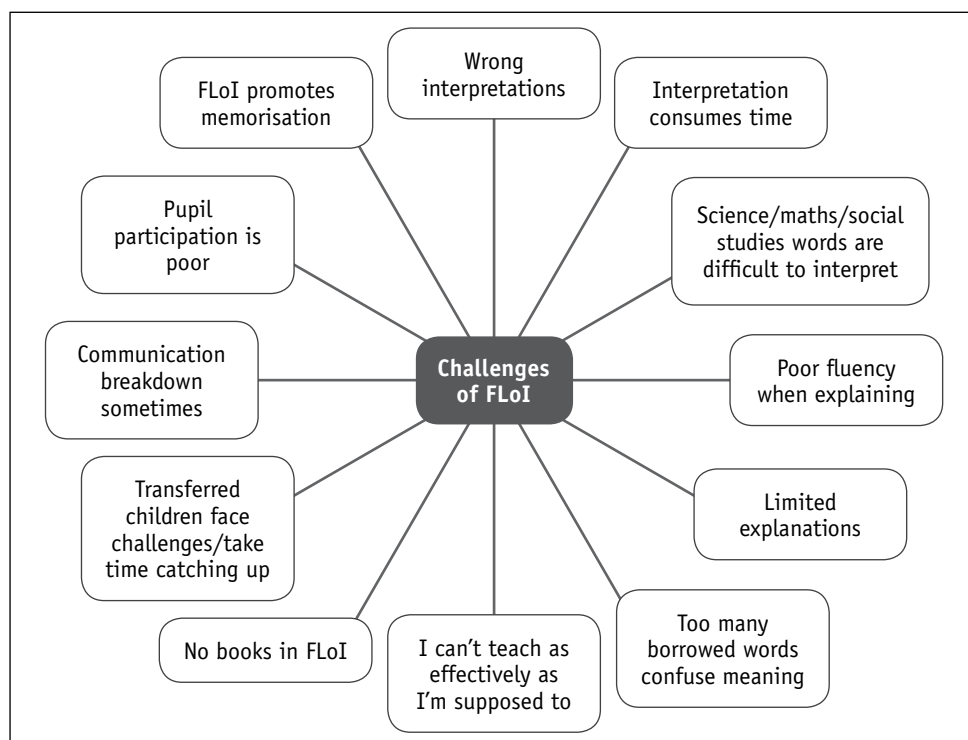
Figure 12.1: Challenges respondents faced during implementation of the FLoI
Source: The author

perspective of cultural learning theory become questionable. Learning using your own cultural foundation presents unique psychological tools for understanding what is taught. Kozulin (2003) says the psychological tools are those symbolic artefacts, such as signs, symbols, texts, formulae and graphic organisers, that when internalised, help individuals to master their own natural psychological functions of perception, memory, attention and so on. 'Each culture has its own set of psychological tools and situations in which these are appropriated. Literacy in its different forms constitutes one of the most powerful of psychological tools' Kozulin (2003: 16). The school should reflect the culture of the surrounding in which it is found. Hambulo, Haambokoma and Milingo (2012: 57) observe that, 'since from an early stage, students from the lower and middle class are exposed to cultural codes different from the ones preferred by the schools, they find it very difficult to adjust to the school environment'.

One teacher respondent wrote this to explain the challenges faced during teaching in the FLoI: 'I am not very good; I am still learning the language'. The FLoI was introduced in schools before teacher education institutions adjusted their curricula. Teachers are not trained to teach in local languages. In December 2015,

the education ministry released a circular, urging teacher education institutions to align their curriculum to that in schools. It said that the teacher who is prepared to implement the curriculum is left behind and expected to deliver the curriculum effectively through a mode he or she was not prepared for — wasn't this as bad as deploying untrained teachers?

Halai and Kajoro (2017) explain that in Tanzania, teachers on teaching practicum were not prepared to deal with pupils transitioning from home language to the monolingual Kiswahili LoI in the teaching of mathematics. In Zambia, the LoI policy is at variance with teacher preparation. Teachers are prepared to teach in English. How can they possibly teach in vernacular languages with which they are not familiar? In selecting one local language called the familiar language of instruction — as was the case of Zambia in 2014 — one wonders whether we thought that the teachers and learners had universal psychological tools for the mediation of instruction. One should also question whether parents become excluded from their children's education when they are introduced to learning through a strange language. A parent and even a teacher in a multilingual society like Zambia may know how to read Cibemba or Cinyanja, Citonga or Ciluvale, but they may not know the meaning of the symbols and the message they deliver. Kozulin (2003: 24) observes, 'symbols may remain useless unless their meaning, as cognitive tools, is properly mediated to the child. The mere availability of signs or texts does not imply that they will be used by students as psychological tools. This fact becomes particularly clear in the studies of the outcome of literacy.' Teaching and learning must be provided in an environment in which the whole truth and meaning are delivered. The mother tongue is simply the best — and only — way to do this. Forcing teachers to teach, children to learn and parents to help children in a language with unfamiliar psychological tools is against the creation of an inclusive society promoting the minority languages.

There is more to teaching and learning than just knowing how to speak the language. Findings in this study show the nature of the challenges of teaching in the FLoI. Chanda (2017: 25) explains: 'All Zambian languages are underdeveloped in the sense that they display very limited inter-translatability in a wide range of topics (science, consumer society, etc.) with languages of the westernized world which is considered to be the modern world.' After colonisation by Britain, Zambia ignored the development of the vocabulary of the local languages. English, a Western language, dominated and still dominates the curriculum at all levels of education and daily use. Today's Zambians are no longer confident and competent to speak in any one of their local languages. Fluency of thought and expression is interrupted when they try to speak in their local language — they stammer, search for words or add English words. This experience is worse for classroom teaching when a local language is used as a LoI. Thus, even native speakers of the local language used for instruction are disadvantaged, let alone those whose mother tongue is not the FLoI used. Teachers' responses say it all: 'My explanation becomes limited.' 'I find

it a challenge to teach science and social studies.' 'You cannot express yourself freely.' 'Time wastage when interpreting from English.' 'Interpretation sometimes is wrongly done so pupils get confused.' 'Some subjects have words which are difficult to translate, for example, science and maths, and there are no new books.' 'Fluency is not good and that compromises effectiveness of lessons.' 'It is difficult to be fluent as you explain.' These and many other difficulties expressed by teachers depict the realities on the ground.

It is appreciated that research informs policy, but depending solely on quantitative research to inform policy may disadvantage others. A curriculum designer and developer should *never* ignore such realities, no matter how few there are that face these difficulties. Deciding on which language to use for instruction should not be solely based on numbers alone. If numbers were to be used to decide the LoI, measures should be put in place to meet the needs of learners from minority languages within the same classroom settings so that they are not disadvantaged. The curriculum in a multilingual society should not be a vehicle for oppression and or segregation. The FLoI policy, as implemented in Zambia, does not sit well with an inclusive society.

The implementation of the FLoI policy does not solve the problem of English and colonialism — in fact, this policy is a reflection of localised colonialism. This is as good as saying that English should not replace the local languages but that it is fine for selected local languages to replace the dialectical languages. Thus, the perceived major local languages can 'swallow' the minority languages. This is possibly more threatening to the existence of minority languages because they are likely to go extinct more quickly than if English were to be used. It must be understood that the FLoI policy introduced in Zambia is not being implemented as a mother tongue. Table 12.2 attempts to show some differences between the mother tongue and the familiar language.

In its current state, the FLoI denies parents any participation in the education of their children, thus worsening the performance of learners. In Zambia, it is common for parents and school-going children to relocate to towns due to formal employment and business. Parents and their children are often unfamiliar with the FLoI in the new environment. It is very difficult for parents to help their children with homework in a language they may not understand. This view is shared by Hambulo et al (2012: 56) who say, 'parental failure to speak the language of the school instruction further disadvantages the children in that the parents become less involved in their education and less able to help with homework'. Munsaka and Kalinde (2017) report that Lenje parents found it difficult to help their children with school work because the LoI was Citonga.

It is also feared that the failure to implement the FLoI may create tribal-related mistrust among the people. Tribalism is one of the divisive problems in Zambia and the curriculum should not be seen to be promoting divisions among citizens. A curriculum should promote unitary values. Language can be a very

Table 12.2: Illustration of the differences between mother tongue and familiar languages

	Mother tongue	Familiar language
1	Language of the child's parents, the language the child is introduced to from birth. Some parents choose to use English in their homes and introduce their children to it as a first language, which becomes the child's mother tongue	Language of play (MESVTEE, 2013a). A language other than the mother tongue that a child/adult learns or uses. It can be a second language
2	There is eloquence of thought when learned	User may not be absolutely eloquent; likely to hesitate and choose words to use
3	For longer and permanent conversations	For short conversations
4	For daily life	For business
5	Complements education and academic achievement	Complements socialisation and integration

Source: Author's own

divisive characteristic and, if not carefully handled, can cause instability within communities. Although there is not much tension in Zambia, the FLoI could breed differences between different language groups. For instance, there have been some differences over the LoI in Zambezi between the Lunda and Luvale (Muzata, 2015). This scenario may not be peculiar to Zambezi alone. Koffie (2012) observed that among the many impediments to successful language planning in Africa is the glorification of the Language of Wider Communication (LWC) Model. The language of wider communication implies 'one nation, one language', and that multilingualism is a liability and not an asset (Koffie 2012). Selecting one or two languages in a zone or country with many languages, discredits the existence of multilingualism. According to Koffie (2012), since independence, managing the various ethnolinguistic identities within the boundaries of independent African nations has been a nightmare for politicians, many using it as a weapon for cheap political gains. However, the issue of language is a human rights issue. It is everyone's right to be taught in their mother tongue, regardless of whether the mother tongue is a language of wider communication or not.

Finally, the policy does not provide for fairness in terms of access to education on an equal basis. Parents would rather send their children to private schools than have them face difficulties in learning through unfamiliar languages. This increases the cost of education for parents. Thus, the concept of equality of educational opportunities is indirectly compromised in favour of a select group of learners who can benefit from government schools.

Conclusion

The choice of dominant languages to represent all other languages, especially as LoI, threatens the existence of minority languages and dialects. It also threatens national and individual identity (Muzata, 2015). There is no better language than the child's mother tongue for the effective construction of knowledge (Muzata, 2010). Dialogue in a mother tongue (as the most familiar language) makes construction of ideas easier. Denying a child the right to learn in their mother tongue diminishes their desire to learn and express themselves fully, as well as their ability to develop their self-concept and esteem.

Odugu (2011) argues that multilingualism that supports only a select few languages of the dominant groups in society marginalises the minority languages or dialects, as observed in India and Nigeria. The popularisation of major languages, including the world languages, threatens the existence of minority languages (Odugu, 2011). In multilingual communities, effort should be made to provide teaching and learning in the child's mother tongue. When this proves difficult, innovations into multilingual teaching methods should be made. Mkandawire (2017b) says that multilingualism should not be seen as a problem but as an asset that helps people to look at a problem or issues from different perspectives. Advantages of learning in multilingual classrooms are many if a multilingual policy is sound and supportive of every learner and teacher.

Studies show that the use of a foreign language, especially English, makes non-native speakers of that language underperform academically. For instance, Brock-Utne (2007) reports the underperformance of Tanzanian and South African learners when taught in English and recommends the teaching in their own African languages. Teaching in a child's own language should literally mean the child's mother tongue — the language of the child's birth. Using the concept of familiar language to replace mother tongue disadvantages many children and renders many teachers incompetent. The adoption of the local language purported to be a familiar language of instruction creates a non-inclusive learning environment where some learners are likely to feel they are not part of the learning society in a particular classroom. For instance, in Tanzania, where Kiswahili was adopted as the national language of instruction, Halai and Kajoro (2017) report that thousands of children from rural and pastoral communities, who were not proficient in Kiswahili, were at a severe disadvantage. Although Zambia has not declared one local language as a LoI, the seven major official languages are not adequate to meet the linguistic diversities of the other 66+ languages and dialects. Our education systems should move towards embracing inclusivity at the classroom level. Odugu argues, 'Mother-language education and multilingual education requires not only policy provisions that are inclusive of all languages but also equitable distribution of adequate resources for the development of educational materials and teacher preparation in these languages' (Odugu 2011: 14).

The curriculum should be used as a storage facility for national heritage. The preservation of minority languages cannot be done without a sound inclusive curriculum. Children's identities can easily be destroyed when they are introduced to a new or unfamiliar language at a tender age — they will not be identified with their mother tongue. Since better education opportunities are available in town schools, children from rural areas who come to learn in towns should be seen as ambassadors for the preservation of their mother tongues. Teaching them in a different local language called the FLoI alienates them. Thus such children lose their sense of belonging to their mother tongue. Adopting Citonga, for instance, in an area where Cilenje is dominant — despite Cilenje being a minority language — is promoting Citonga over Cilenje, to the detriment of Cilenje. Worse though, is subjecting Cilenje mother-tongue learners to learning in Cinyanja, a complete departure discovered in some schools in the Chibombo district near Lusaka. The reason advanced for this is that the majority of children converse in Cinyanja. Surely, if a minority language like Cilenje is not even taught in schools, this is a threat to its continued existence? While the negative effects of the LoI may be on learners whose mother tongue is not the LoI, the impact on minority languages may be worse. Minority languages are threatened with extinction. Language extinction may be gradual and go unnoticed. Extinction may result from how low an ethnolinguistic group feels about its identity. Koffie (2012: 9–10) argues:

> The stronger an ethnolinguistic group feels about its identity, the less likely it will accept an imposed indigenous LWC. The converse is true, that is, if a group has a weak ethnolinguistic identity, it is more prone to accept an imposed local LWC to the detriment of, or in addition to, its native language.

This chapter refutes this argument. No language is inferior or superior to another. The functions of language are beyond trivial thinking of whether adopting a language has to do with superiority or inferiority. In education, it is about quality teaching and quality learning. Rassool, Edwards and Bloch (2006) noted that linguistic choices that favour the perceived dominant language have practical implications for education, because often there is an unequal allocation of teaching and learning resources, in favour of the international languages and at the expense of support for indigenous languages. Likewise, selecting a few local languages as languages of instruction, favours the development of those languages and the extinction of the others that are not used. What morality is this to deny someone the right to learn in a language they understand best? And is it moral to impose a language on others, which they do not understand? What is the impact on learning and the products of learning in a language in which one is not conversant? Underplaying the impact of learning in an unfamiliar language has major repercussions on a nation's economic development because it produces graduates with poor self-esteem, who do not have a thorough understanding of concepts, which impacts negatively on their

productivity. These are merely a few of the repercussions, over and above the loss of individual, national and cultural heritage.

Suggestions for implementing the FLoI

Two problems are at play in the current implementation of the FLoI in Zambia. First, the familiar language is misunderstood at policy level to mean the mother tongue. Second, the FLoI is not being implemented appropriately. It is agreed that learning in a mother tongue has more advantages than learning in a foreign language, but the reality is that the seven local languages chosen to represent the 73+ other languages and dialects are equally foreign to many Zambian children. If the concept of mother tongue education is to be realised, education should be delivered in the 73+ languages and dialects. This should not raise questions of realism or practicality. If we are determined to promote quality education, serious investment in human and material resources related to language policy is cardinal. Crucial issues to address the current LoI dilemma in Zambia include:

- The need to develop vocabulary in all local languages that can help deliver education in local languages;
- Investment in teacher education to empower teachers to teach in languages that learners understand best;
- The need for teacher education to focus on multilingual methodologies that teachers should be able to apply when they are deployed to teach;
- Developing special schools in cosmopolitan and employment-attractive cities for learners from minority languages so that they can learn in their familiar (mother-tongue) languages;
- Developing policies that support the maintenance of minority language programmes in education so that languages that are not used in education do not gain a relegation status (Rassool, Edwards & Bloch, 2006) but remain preserved for individual, cultural and national identity;
- Broadening the national capacity for implementing mother-tongue instruction policy. If the country has no capacity, it is better to revert to English as a medium of instruction. The adoption of English, in particular, may be a better inclusive option than subjecting children to a variety of languages, which eventually end up confusing them in their learning;
- Policy shifts should be well informed by research.

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CHAPTER 13

The language in education conundrum from an empirical perspective: Using evidence to inform policy

Surette van Staden & Nelladee McLeod Palane

Introduction

Language in education in South Africa has a long and complex history which has affected different demographic groupings in starkly contrasting ways and has resulted in the current duality that is in evidence in the South African schooling system. Hlatshwayo (2000) has highlighted the relationship between education and social processes and argues that education cannot be studied in a vacuum, but must be located within the broader context of interrelated political, social and economic changes.

This study presents empirical evidence for the differences in reading literacy achievement of Grade 4 learners between home language and language of the test across the 11 official languages in an analysis of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 data. South Africa's participation in this international comparative study dates back to 2006, with repeat participation in the PIRLS 2011 cycle and, most recently, the PIRLS 2016 cycle of assessment.

Views on multilingualism

Multilingualism is a policy orientation towards the formal recognition of multiple languages and the systemic promotion of language learning (Plüddemann, 2010). Plüddemann (2010) further states that *multilinguality* includes all the non-standard varieties under postmodern notions of heteroglossia, which gives equal standing to all languages and dialects being spoken within a formalised system. However, the goal of elevating all languages to equal status still appears to be far from attained, and as Dowse (2014) explains, official language policy is

interlinked with the politics of domination and resistance. Dowse (2014) argues that in the past, South Africa's colonial and white minority governments have wielded language policy in education as an instrument of political manoeuvring. The Language in Education Policy (LiEP), from a policy perspective, has been key to the transformation agenda of the South African education system.

The challenge of transformation in South Africa since becoming a democracy in 1994 has met a number of obstacles, specifically in the provision of universal quality education for all (Motala, 2001). Transformation is required in a number of spheres and language rights has been one area in the spotlight (Ahmed & Sayed, 2009). While the recognition of the 11 official languages (with sign language for the deaf having recently been included to make 12 languages) was heralded by many as a victory for the constitutional rights of African language speakers, some argue that the creation of distinct language boundaries post-1994 has been part of the discourse of exclusion, which has been dominant over the years (Peberdy, 2001; Banda & Mwanza, 2017). Peberdy (2001), for example, argues that the negative use of stereotypes and terminology, such as 'illegal aliens' for immigrants from other parts of Africa, is a reflection of the legacy of tribalism and hostility toward immigrants and that these perceptions and attitudes towards the many immigrants living within South Africa's borders need to change. Facchini, Mayda and Mendola found that 'immigration is very widely opposed, and that opposition against foreigners has increased in the post-apartheid period' (Facchini et al, 2013: 339). The flow of migrants to South Africa from both eastern and southern Africa from countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Malawi brings cultural, racial and ideological considerations. Potentially large adjustment costs, due to the lack of local language skills, are also a factor that shapes perceptions and attitudes towards immigrants (Facchini et al, 2013). In stark contrast to the hostility described by Peberdy (2001) to non-citizens living within South Africa's borders are the language-related efforts made by the Finnish government to integrate immigrants into Finnish society described by Tarnanen and Pöyhönen (2015). Policy-makers and integration educators in Finland still firmly believe that language proficiency and literacy skills have the power to change the material circumstances of migrants who are marginalised (Tarnanen & Pöyhönen, 2015: 10).

The challenge of integrating diverse peoples into a country that already has multiple language groupings and, consequently, many dialects is immense, and a drift toward the use of English in many official quarters (Van der Walt & Evans, 2017) has been inevitable. However, the ever-increasing role of neoliberalism in education and, specifically of language in education, must be interrogated against the backdrop of South Africa's ever-increasing linguistic complexity as a result of both immigration and the internal migration of the local population in search of

economic opportunities. Neoliberalism in education is a pervasive and current force shaping perceptions of language issues globally:

> *Neoliberalism, as an economic doctrine that valorizes individual entrepreneurial freedom and marketization of society, is rapidly transforming many domains central to the social life of language* (Shin & Park, 2016: 443).

A neoliberal argument is that learning English offers the possibility of social mobility and greater opportunities. Those who interrogate such a claim note that the global spread of English is tied to histories of colonialism and a complex process of globalisation, and they argue that the neoliberal force is one that leads to further social stratification and linguistic as well as cultural homogenisation, which threatens the survival of local languages (Bernstein et al, 2015). Under a neoliberal banner, learners are pushed to choose languages that will 'make them more competitive, as what language one speaks and what culture he/she embodies demonstrates how marketable the person is' (Bernstein et al, 2015: 7). However, Bernstein et al (2015) question whether learning English actually translates into economic opportunities for the many affected by a neoliberal transformation, which often disguises class-based interests. Shin and Park (2016: 444) argue that 'neoliberalism is in fact a project for the restoration of the power of the economic elites'; they point out that increasing flexibilisation of work leads to an emphasis on communicative skills, where the ability to effectively communicate across teams and fields is seen as a characteristic of the ideal worker. However, due to this view, language teaching becomes about profit-making and language itself is commodified. Moreover, according to Shin and Park, 'language functions as an essential part of the mechanism that sustains neoliberalism' (Shin & Park, 2016: 450).

In contrast to an overt reliance on English, Banda and Mwanza (2017) advocate a multilingual discourse over monoglot one-language-at-a-time discourse practices. Banda and Mwanza (2017) draw the learners' linguistic backgrounds back into the centre of classroom practice. They suggest the use of multiple languages, including hybrid forms, in classroom practice in the form of 'translanguaging', which is characterised by the alternation of languages in spoken and written form to engender multilingual and multimodal literacies (Banda & Mwanza, 2017). Banda and Mwanza (2017) argue that, in Zambia, initial literacy development initiatives through a singular mother tongue have not shown the desired results because learners' multilingual linguistic behaviour has not been accounted for in the form of translanguaging. Furthermore, there has been a misrecognition of the standard language as the sole legitimate language of official business and education, especially where there is (as in the case of the missionary and colonial project into Africa) an artificial attempt to 'stabilise' a language, which more often reflects the written language rather than the language spoken naturally in the communities (Banda & Mwanza, 2017). The artificial standardisation of

languages throws light on why attempts to use regional standard languages to promote initial literacy in Zambia have proved difficult (Banda & Mwanza, 2017) and these lessons need to be further interrogated for application to the South African context (Rule & Land, 2017).

Banda and Mwanza (2017), in their observations on Zambia, note that 'there is a need to think of models in which Zambian languages and English are used side-by-side as equal partners in the teaching and learning of content right from Grade 1' (Banda & Mwanza, 2017: 128). This observation possibly means that teachers in South Africa need to be specifically trained to teach English as a second language and it needs to be taught with clear levels of progression throughout the curriculum to reach a level that cultivates abstract reasoning and critical thought by the time the learner reaches Grade 12. Using this framework, schools would prioritise and emphasise the learning of English L2 alongside home language instruction in the early grades (McLeod Palane, 2017; Pretorius, 2017).

The South African linguistic landscape

South Africa gives recognition to 11 official languages (excluding sign language). South African Census 2011 data indicate that isiZulu is the most widely spoken language in South African households (22.7 per cent), followed by isiXhosa (16 per cent), Afrikaans (13.5 per cent) and English (9.6 per cent) as the major languages. Sotho languages, which include Sepedi, are spoken by 9.1 per cent of households, followed by Setswana (8 per cent) and Sesotho (7.6 per cent). Minority languages are Xitsonga (4.5 per cent), siSwati (2.6 per cent), Tshivenda (2.4 per cent) and isiNdebele (2.1 per cent). Finlayson and Madiba (2002) detail the constitutional framework that provides for all these languages to be developed, in particular African languages. These authors argue that the question is not *whether* these languages should be developed, but *how* within the shortest possible time where concepts that are already in existence in Afrikaans and English are available in these languages too. In attempts to ensure the development of all the official languages in South Africa, the LiEP (Department of Education, *Government Gazette* no. 18546, 19 December 1997), attempts to promote language equity and quality education in all 11 official languages. LiEP stipulates that other official languages should be used as languages of instruction in South Africa alongside English. The implication of this reality is that textbooks in languages other than English should become obtainable and that there should be systematic development in the area of terminology and translation. Nonetheless, Edwards and Ngwaru (2011) make the observation that the language setup in South Africa is still dominated by English books. Learners in African language classrooms predominantly use textbooks as a main, and often single, resource with no benefit of additional literature (Van Staden, Bosker & Bergbauer, 2016). Kamwangamalu (2003) argues that the LiEP failed to develop all languages. Taylor (2007) states that despite government policy for children to be taught in their mother tongue, African children (who

are both the majority as well as the poorest contingent of society) are to a large extent instructed in English from Grade 4. For many children, English is a second or third language. Despite this reality, promotion of the use of the indigenous African languages has not been realised. In fact, Kamwangamalu (2003) argues for a language shift away from indigenous African languages to English.

Teachers in South African classrooms often make use of code-switching (Van Staden et al, 2016). Ncoko, Osman and Cockroft (2000) define code-switching as the practice of using two or more languages in the same conversation. While code-switching results from the interconnectedness of languages and flies in the face of attempts to isolate and separate languages (Ncoko et al, 2000), Probyn (2009) observes that code-switching is neither generally accepted as an appropriate classroom strategy nor condoned in teacher training. Probyn (2001) explains the practicality of code-switching where classrooms often offer a mix of English and mother tongue. In these instances, teachers deliver pieces of English content, but switch to mother tongue for purposes of elaboration or discussion. De Wet (2002) notes that teachers often lack the English proficiency necessary for the effective teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum. Probyn (2001) is of the view that the medium of instruction then becomes a barrier to effective learning and teaching, and particularly to the constructivist notion of teachers and learners collaborating in meaning-creation.

South Africa's participation in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) administers PIRLS in five-year cycles and requires the assessment of learners who have had four years of schooling (Mullis et al, 2007). For most countries, this requirement translates into Grade 4 learners. PIRLS 2006 aimed to provide trends and international comparisons for the reading achievement of Grade 4 learners and also focused on learners' proficiencies in relation to goals and standards for reading instruction, the effect of the home environment and how parents nurture reading literacy, the enactment of the curriculum, availability of time and reading resources for learning to read in schools, and classroom strategies for reading instruction (Mullis et al, 2004). PIRLS 2006 in South Africa not only assessed a population of Grade 4 learners but also included a population of Grade 5 learners as a national option within the study (Howie et al, 2009). In comparison to Grade 4 learners internationally, South African Grade 5 learners obtained the lowest score (302 score points) of the 45 participating education systems (Standard Error [SE] = 5.6). South African Grade 4 learners achieved on average 253 score points (SE = 4.6). Average achievement for both these grades was well below the fixed international reference average of 500 points.

South Africa's participation in PIRLS 2011 brought disappointing results yet again. For purposes of the 2011 cycle, a Grade 5 population was assessed in Afrikaans and English to track trends from PIRLS 2006 to PIRLS 2011. In order to assess Grade 4 learners across all 11 official languages, South Africa participated in the prePIRLS 2011 study. PrePIRLS 2011 provided developing countries with the opportunity to test reading literacy at a more accessible level than PIRLS. With shorter texts, easier vocabulary, simpler grammar and less emphasis on higher-order reading skills, prePIRLS was expected to present developing contexts with better information on the nature of achievement.

PrePIRLS 2011 results pointed to continued underperformance by South African Grade 4 learners, with little evidence of improved overall and disaggregated reading literacy scores (461, SE = 3.7), the lowest reading achievement score in comparison with the international centre point of 500 (Mullis et al, 2012). Additionally, language-specific difficulties have been highlighted by Van Staden et al, (2016), whose analyses of prePIRLS 2011 data found that testing in African languages predicts significantly lower results compared to their English counterparts. Reading achievement outcomes for Grade 4 students who wrote prePIRLS 2011 across the 11 official languages are shown in Figure 13.1 (Van Staden et al, 2016) and are discussed briefly.

Learners who were tested in English outperformed learners who were tested in any of the African languages. Additionally, learners across all the languages
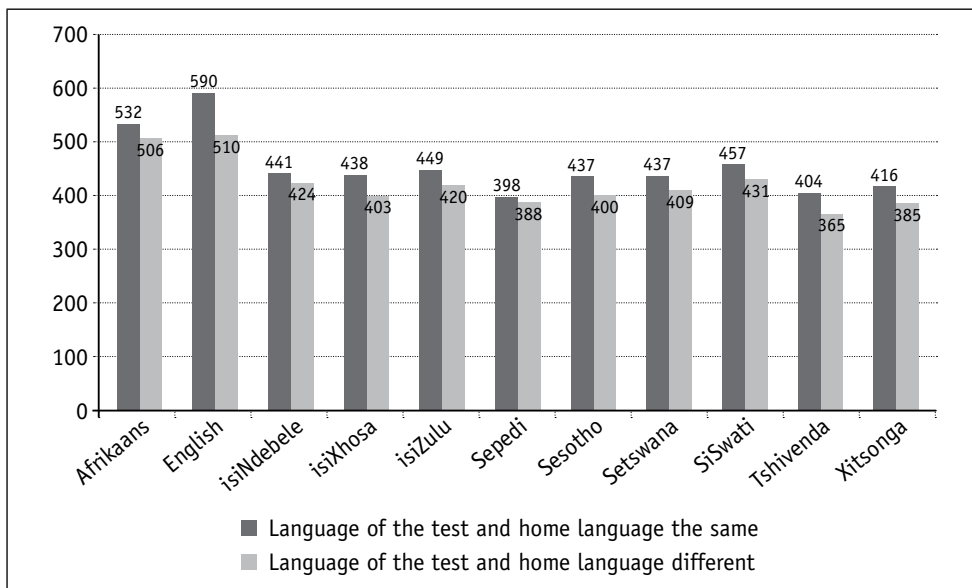
Figure 13.1: South African Grade 4 student performance by test language in the same or different language to their home language

Source: Van Staden et al, 2016

performed worse when the language in which they were tested in prePIRLS 2011 differed from their home language. Van Staden et al (2016) found exponentially worse results for children from African language backgrounds rather than Afrikaans: as much as 0.29 points lower of a standard deviation can be expected when children were tested in an African language that did not correspond with the learners' home language. Findings from this study provide evidence that African children stand to be disadvantaged the most when a solid home language foundation has not been established and when their instruction between Grades 1 and 3 is only available through a language other than their home language (Van Staden et al, 2016).

The picture painted by PIRLS 2016

The most recently conducted PIRLS cycle, the results of which were released in December 2017, places South African Grade 4 reading literacy achievement last in PIRLS Literacy (previously called prePIRLS in the 2011 cycle), with an average achievement of 320 (SE = 4.4) (Howie et al, 2017). While similar to the achievement obtained by Egypt, countries like Morocco, Kuwait, Iran and Denmark all outperformed South Africa. Disaggregated results further provide evidence that South African Grade 4 learners mostly have the ability to locate and retrieve details that are explicitly stated in a literary text. Similarly, there was evidence for the ability to locate and reproduce explicitly stated information from an informational text (Mullis et al, 2012). Alarmingly, the majority of South African Grade 4 learners were unable to make straightforward inferences and integrate ideas and evidence across text or interpret events to provide reasons, motivations or feelings with text-based support. The severity of these findings are worsened by the fact that these learners were not only tested with an easier assessment but also in the language (any one of 11 official languages) in which they had been receiving instruction from Grade 1 to Grade 3 in accordance with the LiEP.

For purposes of PIRLS Literacy 2016, 12 810 Grade 4 learners were tested nationally in 293 schools. It has to be kept in mind that across the PIRLS cycles in South Africa, learners were tested in the language in which they had received instruction during the Foundation Phase. The language of testing in PIRLS therefore corresponds to the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) at the school. Learners were, therefore, not necessarily tested in their home language, but in the language to which they were supposedly most exposed from Grade 1 to Grade 3. Achievements by test language are shown in Figure 13.2.

Figure 13.2 indicates clearly the low performance that is observed, particularly for learners who were tested in African languages. In terms of the difference between the language in which learners were tested and the language they speak at home, these were the results:
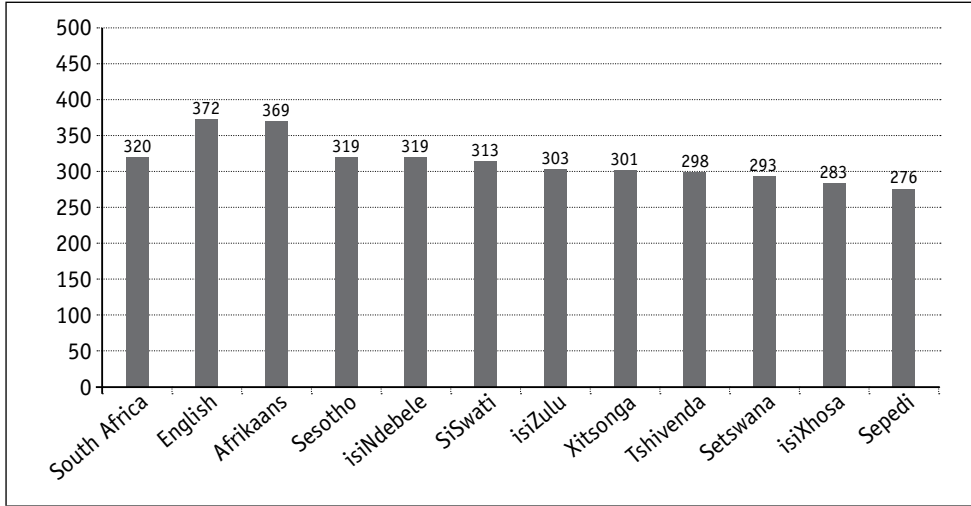
Figure 13.2: PIRLS Literacy 2016 results by test language
Source: Howie et al, 2017
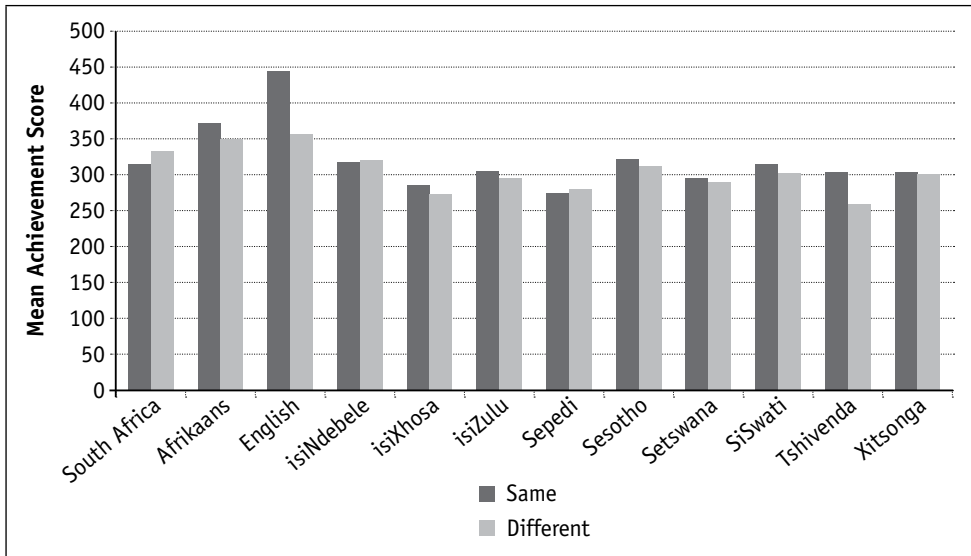
Figure 13.3: PIRLS Literacy 2016 results by difference between language of the test and home language
Source: Howie et al, 2017

Results for Figure 13.3 were obtained by comparing the language of the test and the learner's response to a question in the learner questionnaire about their home language. For the most part, achievement was lower where the language of the test and the home language did not coincide. The pattern from prePIRLS 2011 therefore remains the same. Findings like these, where learners perform better in English achievement tests over other languages, may point to increased instances where parents prefer to send their children to schools where they will receive instruction in English. If the perception remains that English can be associated with better quality education and better future prospects, the likeliness of this pattern to increase in future, at the risk of the diminished worth of African languages, becomes a stark reality. This finding can be made against evidence from another variable, where learners were asked the frequency with which they spoke the language of the test at home.

Table 13.1: Reported frequency of speaking the language of the test at home

	% of Grade 4 learners	Expected achievement score
I always speak the language of the test at home	66%	314
I almost always speak the language of the test at home	9%	313
I sometimes speak the language of the test at home	19%	363
I never speak the language of the test at home	6%	309

Source: Compiled from the study

Table 13.1 indicates that those learners who reported to 'sometimes speak the language of the test at home' may therefore very well be those African language speakers who attend English schools. From this group of learners (a reported 19 per cent), the best achievement can be expected at 363 score points. As expected, learners who 'never speak the language of the test at home' can be expected to perform the lowest at 309 score points, a pattern that confirms previous analyses done in prePIRLS 2011 (Van Staden et al, 2016).

Possible implications for the South African education landscape

This chapter explored multilingualism against a complex linguistic and policy landscape in South Africa. If multilingualism is seen as a policy orientation that recognises multiple languages and values the systemic promotion of language

learning, as stated earlier in the chapter, the logic of the LiEP is based on the premise that South Africa is multilingual as a society and mother tongue education is the basis of language of learning.

In 1996, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was established with the mandate to promote and create conditions for the development and use of all the official languages, while also acting as watchdog to investigate complaints of any violation of language rights, policy or practice (Nyika, 2009). Despite the existence of PanSALB, Nyika (2009) notes that education-related complaints lodged with PanSALB declined between 2006 and 2007, while PanSALB itself has noted that the general decline in complaints lodged with the board can be attributed to a lack of confidence in the board's ability to fulfil its mandate adequately (PanSALB, 2006). It has to be borne in mind that any student assessment in South Africa takes place against a multifaceted policy context, which gives recognition to 11 official languages (with sign language for the deaf having recently been included to make 12 languages). While the constitutional language framework provides a significant advance for language planning, the implementation of specific policies that have a direct impact on students in the classroom has not been without its challenges. Desai (2001) argues that there is little correspondence between the official status of a language and the prominence it has in education. African languages would probably be more attractive as media of instruction if these languages were to receive greater currency in day-to-day society. Finlayson and Madiba (2002) add to this sentiment by saying that developing languages, such as those in South Africa, need conscious and deliberate effort to accelerate their development more effectively. But can development take place when English seems to be a priority language? Bilingual or multilingual education is conceptualised as adding a second or even a third language to the learners' repertoire in order to promote academic and linguistic success. The policy neither prevents access to English nor diminishes the student's opportunity to engage meaningfully in English. Instead, the policy provides more opportunity for the use of English as medium of communication (Heugh, 2000). The current question is, therefore, whether this policy intention happens at the cost of African languages and enables parental choices for their children to receive schooling in English, as evidenced by PIRLS Literacy 2016 results that were presented in this chapter.

Kamwangamalu (2003) stated that the LiEP failed to work for all languages and observed a language shift away from indigenous African languages to English, specifically in urban black communities. Kamwangamalu (2003) cites evidence that students only regard English as the language of learning, 'without which one "can do nothing", "cannot get a job", "cannot succeed in life". Zulu is not associated with any of these attributes. On the contrary, the purpose of learning Zulu is to keep the language and the culture it embodies alive, so that the children did not forget their roots' (Kamwangamalu, 2003: 236). Nyika (2009) adds his voice to the concerns that little progress has been made towards implementing

a multilingual policy and that resistance to mother-tongue education persists despite the documented merits thereof. According to Edwards and Ngwaru (2011), implementation of the policy could be successful only if it were to be coupled with the development of appropriate pedagogies and materials. Challenges to materials development include the publishers' dependence on the education sector, since the majority of the population cannot and do not buy books; the slow implementation of bilingual education, and differing opinions about the desirability of translation to increase the amount of reading material available in African languages (Edwards & Ngwaru, 2011).

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Is the matrix-embedded language the alternative medium of instruction for Namibia's multilingual schools?

Liswani Simasiku & Choshi D Kasanda

Introduction

As long as Namibian schools continue to use a second language as the medium of instruction, the use of a mother tongue in English-medium-of-instruction classrooms is unavoidable. The basis of this research project was to suggest a medium of instruction that would blend English and the mother tongue in the classroom to enhance classroom participation, and improve results in the year-end examinations in Grade 10 English Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The ultimate aim of many countries such as Namibia, which advocate a second language as the medium of instruction in schools, is to make learners proficient in the target language at the end of their schooling. In agreement with the above view, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC, 1993: 1) states that 'schools will be expected to play their role in the popularization of English as the official language'. It is further indicated in the language policy that 'education should enable learners to acquire reasonable competency in the official language' (Swarts as cited in Trewby & Fitchat, 2000: 39).

Schools have a duty to fulfil government policies and objectives. However, schools are also there to serve the communication needs of learners in the classrooms so schools have to seek ways to address the needs of their learners. It is for this reason that the matrix-embedded model, a type of code-switching, is proposed in this chapter. According to Myers-Scotton (1993), in this model, one of the languages involved in code-switching plays a dominant role. This language is labelled the matrix language (ML) and sets the morpho-syntactic frame, while there are insertions from the other language, labelled the embedded language (EL). In this study, the idea is that English could be the matrix language while the mother tongue could be the embedded language.

Teachers use code-switching (CS) in the classroom for a variety of important functions (Ferguson, 2009; Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009). Ferguson (2009) provides three broad functions of code-switching, which encompasses almost all that teachers do in the classroom to bring about learning: '(1) CS for constructing and transmitting knowledge … (2) CS for classroom management … and (3) CS for interpersonal relations …' (2009: 231–232). Creese and Blackledge advocate for the use of 'bilingual instructional strategies, in which two or more languages are used alongside each other' (2010: 103). Further, Creese and Blackledge (2010: 107) note that 'across all linguistically diverse contexts, moving between languages is natural, how to harness and build on this will depend on the sociopolitical and historical environment in which such practice is embedded and the local ecologies of schools and classrooms'. Hence CS should be encouraged in the classroom to enhance understanding of the content being taught, a view supported by Ahmad and Jusoff, who note that 'Teachers … have been employing code-switching as a means of providing students with the opportunities to communicate and enhancing students' understanding' (2009: 49) and that '… code-switching would be able to ensure the transfer of intended skills to the learners' (2009: 50). These views seem to be subsumed under the three broad functions identified by Ferguson (2009).

Unfortunately, in Namibia, even though there is enough evidence in the reviewed literature for the use of two languages side by side, which Creese and Blackledge (2010) refer to as translanguaging, the language policy advocates for the use of English after Grade 3 as the medium of instruction. In fact, many parents in Namibia support the use of English in schools rather than the use of the local language for practical and utilitarian functions (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Mostert et al, 2012). Nonetheless, after reviewing literature on attitudes towards CS in classrooms, Ferguson (2009: 233) sees it as a 'pedagogically useful communicative resource' for the teacher to enhance learning in the classroom. In this way, multilingual learners in Namibian schools might be helped to reduce the effects of learning the school subjects in English only, the official language in the country (Vorster, 2008). Indeed, the use of the matrix-embedded model might prove useful in the use of two or more languages in teaching ESL in Namibian schools.

According to Ogechi (2002) and Mugo and Ongo'nda (2017), the matrix language is the language that sets the grammar of the sentence containing the switches; in the case of Namibia, this could be English. Ogechi further states that the syntax of the matrix language is active in code-switching as it sets the frame of the switched projection of the complementation while the syntax of the embedded language is dormant. In Namibia, English is the target language and the medium of instruction (host language). Therefore, it should be the matrix language and the mother tongue or the local language should be the embedded language (guest language). Wentz (1977) called the matrix language the language of the sentence since it sets the grammar and the syntax of the sentence.

In addition, Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997) maintain that proponents of the communicative approach do not agree that the target language should be the exclusive means of communication in the classroom. They note that the teacher can even start a lesson in the learners' L1 and switch the code as the lesson progresses. Furthermore, a class of learners may feel intimidated by the exclusive use of the target language and they may appreciate more first language use. Furthermore, Kilfoil and Van der Walt claim that 'learners should not be pressured into speaking in the target language, since this causes anxiety and lowers motivation' (1997: 17). They further caution teachers, 'not to force learners to speak the target language, but to accept responses in the first language' (1997: 23).

The Constitution of Namibia

According to Chamberlain (1992), there are six factors that governments should consider when formulating a language policy for a country; however, for this study, the Constitution of the country was selected as it is applicable. The Constitution of a country is supreme, and all laws and by-laws that govern a particular country should be in line with its provisions. Therefore, the Namibian Language Policy should have been guided by the Constitution of Namibia. However, the decision to use English as a medium of instruction in Namibia was planned before the Constitution was drafted. Legère, Trewby and Van Graan (2000) note that Namibia was one of the few countries that, prior to independence, discussed in detail the pros and cons of various languages as the official language and medium of instruction after independence.

Since the issue of the medium of instruction in Namibia was premeditated, the provision of Article 3.2 of the Constitution, which states that 'nothing contained in this Constitution shall prohibit the use of any other language as a medium of instruction in private schools or in schools financed or subsidized by the state, subject to compliance with such requirements as may be imposed by law, to ensure proficiency in the official language, or for pedagogical reasons', had to be ignored during the 1993 Language Conference. Article 3 of the Namibian Constitution does not prescribe that English should be the medium of instruction in schools; however, as mentioned earlier, this was premeditated and had to be implemented as such. Harlech-Jones (cited in Trewby & Fitchat, 2000: 29) points out that Article 3.2 in the Namibian Constitution states that 'any other language besides English may be used as a medium of instruction … subject to compliance with the requirements as may be imposed by law, to ensure proficiency in the official language, or pedagogical reasons'. Harlech-Jones further maintains that the above clause should have been the key to language policy formulation in education because, according to him, it means that there is no relationship that can be automatically inferred between the official language and the medium of instruction.

The actual language situation of Namibia

Namibian languages can be linguistically divided into three groups, namely, the Bantu languages, and the Khoisan and Indo-European languages. In Namibia, the Bantu languages are a large family, including the Caprivi, Kavango, Owambo and Herero languages. The Khoisan languages are spoken only in western and southern Namibia. Tötemeyer (2009) states that there are 14 written languages in Namibia with standardised orthographies, and 16 oral languages for which no orthography exists. Tötemeyer further claims that the use of local languages in schools is not viable pedagogically because of the many languages spoken in Namibia and the underdevelopment of Namibian national languages for concept expression in schools. However, such arguments are advanced only because those in authority have little political will to use local languages as media of instruction in schools. According to Heugh, Siegrühn and Plüddemann (1995), Mwansoko (1990) and Wolff (2006), research has shown that there are known means of developing African languages for teaching school work and these should be used to enhance the learners' concept understanding in class.

Before independence, each region used its own local language for administration and as a medium of instruction in Grades 1 to 4. It was recognised that this would be extremely difficult in a centrally located government, so the new government looked for a language that could facilitate mobility between regions and would ensure easy communication between citizens and the international world. Schmied (1991) posits the view that nation-building and unity were of great importance to most African countries, including Namibia, after independence. The selection of a Namibian language would have been ideal; however, the selection of one Namibian language as a medium of instruction or official language could have threatened the unity of the state because Namibian citizens do not share a common mother tongue. For this reason, English was seen as a politically neutral language.

The idea of English being the official language and the medium of instruction has been contested by Donaldson (2000), who asserts that Afrikaans should have been accorded the status of official language and the medium of instruction in schools because it is the lingua franca of many and a mother tongue to tens of thousands of Namibians. Legère et al (2000) are in agreement with Donaldson (2000), maintaining that Afrikaans is estimated to be understood by 70 per cent of Namibians. This, according to Legère et al, makes Afrikaans an ideal medium of instruction and official language. Furthermore, Prah notes that it is naïve to think that when people are educated through the medium of Afrikaans, they cannot operate at an international level. He argues that 'the Afrikaans-speaking and Afrikaans-educated Dr Chris Barnard accomplished his epoch-making heart transplants, the significance that Afrikaans had become a language of science and technology, equal to any other in the world …' (Prah, 2007: 10). What Prah seems to forget in his argument here is the fact that in the case of Namibia, the wounds of apartheid and colonialisation were still fresh at the time of independence and

Afrikaans was associated with it. Further, the need to use a 'neutral' language was uppermost in the politicians' minds. Further, without political will, the use of English and a local language in school as policy might not be easy to achieve. As Ferguson (2009: 236) posits, 'demand for English-medium instruction from parents, pupils, and the public will remain politically difficult to resist'.

According to Donaldson (2000), Afrikaans is still being used in many places in Namibia and still enjoys the status of being the lingua franca in central, southern, western and eastern Namibia. Therefore, the current status that Afrikaans enjoys in the country makes it the ideal language of instruction — as long as English language teaching is strengthened. Afrikaans is regarded as one of the indigenous languages of Namibia and the use of an indigenous language would have been ideal — even though it might have benefited some more than others — because, as Prah (2007) contends, Afrikaans has evolved as a language that can be used for teaching sciences and technology. Therefore, if the Constitution allows the use of other languages as media of instruction, it is legal to code-switch in English-medium classrooms.

Government policy and its objectives on language

The new SWAPO government had to act fast to ensure unity of purpose and sever the furtherance of Afrikaans as the official language in an independent Namibia. Tötemeyer (1978), cited in Donaldson (2000), opined that to please and retain those who had voted for it, the SWAPO government implemented the new language policy that made English the official language rather than Afrikaans. Indeed, the replacement of Afrikaans with English as the medium of instruction was largely due to a decline in the popularity of Afrikaans in Owamboland, home to Namibia's largest population group and SWAPO's political base. The rejection of Afrikaans was clearly articulated by Tötemeyer (as cited in Donaldson, 2000), who at that time said that Afrikaans had begun to decline in acceptability among the modernising elites because of opposition to the South African government. It is important to note that South Africa had been the occupying force in Namibia and its language represented a repressive past from which Namibia needed to be free, hence the rejection of Afrikaans, the language of the oppressor.

The decline in the popularity of Afrikaans in the SWAPO base spelled the death of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools; however, Afrikaans enjoyed popularity in the southern, central and eastern parts of Namibia (Tötemeyer, cited in Donaldson, 2000). It must be noted that language policy in a multilingual country like Namibia is complex and requires a concerted effort from all citizens to agree on the medium of instruction. To consolidate its political agenda mentioned in the language policy proposal ten years earlier, the Minister of Education said that 'the isolationist position has deprived the country of meaningful interaction with the outside world … the isolation has been further

reinforced by communication problems and that Afrikaans, which was widely used for business and government, is not an international language' (MBESC, 1999: 10).

The linguistic isolation of Namibia prior to independence was one of the main reasons for dumping Afrikaans in favour of English as an official language and medium of instruction in schools. The fact that the teachers and learners were not ready for this change and that there was a possibility of code-switching and code-mixing during instructions seemed not to matter much. In fact, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC, 2003) was silent on the use of code-switching or code-mixing in teaching school subjects. It should be pointed out, however, that other writers have defended Namibia's language policy. For example, Swarts (in Trewby & Fitchat, 2000: 39) says that the language policy for schools subscribes to certain important principles highlighted by UNESCO, among which are the following:

- Primary education should enable learners to acquire reasonable competence in the official language.
- Education should promote the language and cultural identity of learners by using their home language as the medium of instruction in at least Grades 1 to 3, and by teaching it throughout the years of formal education.
- Ideally, schools should offer at least two languages as subjects in order to promote and foster bilingualism.

The Language Policy for Namibian Schools (MBESC, 2003: 14) also reinforces other government policy documents and states that:

- Grades 1–3 will be taught through the mother tongue or a predominant local language.
- Grade 4 will be a transitional year when the change to English as a medium of instruction must take place.
- In Grades 5–7 English will be the medium of instruction.
- Grades 8–12 will be taught through the medium of English and the mother tongue will continue to be taught as a subject.

Namibia has also followed the trend common in sub-Saharan Africa, where there is a strong belief that the home language should be the medium of instruction in Grades 1 to 3 and from Grade 4 there should be a switch to English as the medium of instruction. According to Clegg (2007: 5), this has some advantages, such as:

- It provides a connection to their community and culture.
- It provides cognitive and literacy foundations for education as a whole.
- It is an essential foundation for education in a second language, especially for children with low socio-economic status, for whom it has an important compensatory value.
- It is an essential foundation for second language learning.

However, Clegg (2007) is quick to mention that instruction in the home language in the early years of education, without continuing home language instruction in cognitively demanding subjects, is unlikely to raise the level of school achievement. In Namibia, home languages are used as media of instruction and learning in Grades 1 to 3. Grade 4 is a transitional grade where some subjects are taught through the mother tongue and others through English. Thereafter, learners 'exit' the first language medium of instruction programme, and English becomes the sole medium of instruction and learning. This type of instruction, where learners are taught through the first language for three years and then switch to English is known as an 'early exit' bilingual programme. Ovando and Collier (1998) believe that the early exit bilingual programme does not support learners sufficiently to cope with content subjects and achieve academic proficiency. According to Ovando and Collier (1998), research has shown that early exit bilingual programmes do not provide learners with enough time to learn and become proficient in another language — early exit bilinguals lag behind their counterparts who are first language users. This is partly because 'there is a serious lack of continuity between the English taught as a subject in the junior primary and the demand of English medium of instruction teaching in the upper primary schools' (Langhan, in MEC, 1993: 134). Langhan further notes that the amount of English teaching and its quality are not adequate to prepare learners to cope with the sudden shift to English, forcing them to code-switch most of the time. This is echoed by McDonald and Burroughs (1991), who note that the shift occurs when learners do not have adequate proficiency in English to meet the requirements of using it as the medium of instruction. According to McDonald and Burroughs (1991), learners may have acquired an English vocabulary of only about 800 words by the end of junior primary through the learning of English as a subject, whereas they require 5 000 English words to understand the work required for the upper primary phase. Accordingly, for effective instruction in L2 teachers need to appreciate the challenges their learners are facing in acquiring the English words for effective communication and understanding of school work (Schmitt, 2007; Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe, 2011).

The first language medium of instruction in the Namibian education system fails because of its 'early exit' without the continuation of instruction in the first language in cognitively demanding subjects. The MBESC (2003) states that in the upper primary phase, the mother tongue may only be used in a supportive role and should continue to be taught as a subject. The use of the mother tongue in a supporting role is also insufficiently effective in terms of academic achievement compared to the late exit model.

Research methods

The qualitative data reported in this chapter were collected from 12 teachers teaching Grade 10 English Second Language (ESL) in the Caprivi (now Zambezi) education region in Eastern Namibia. These teachers were purposely sampled and

had to meet the following criteria: they should be teaching Grade 10 ESL in schools that performed well or average or poorly in three consecutive years; they also had to be teaching in an urban or peri-urban or rural area in the Caprivi (Zambezi) region; and they were expected to speak one or two of the many local languages found in the region. Twelve ESL teachers (four from each school) met the above criteria and formed the sample for this study.

A questionnaire and class observations were used to collect the data from the 12 ESL Grade 10 teachers. The questionnaire, which comprised mostly open-ended questions, was completed by all 12 ESL teachers, but only 11 were returned fully completed. Yonesaka and Metoki's (2007) checklist was used to collect the data during English-lesson observations. Each ESL teacher was observed three times during which Yonesaka and Metoki's checklist was used. The occurrence of a repeated code-switch was recorded on the observation checklist for further analysis. The results were presented in tabular and chart forms after analysis in order to respond to the research question of whether the matrix-embedded model would provide an alternative to the current medium of instruction issue in Namibian schools.

Results

The dilemma facing Namibian schools is that the Namibian Ministry of Education has adopted English as the medium of instruction, irrespective of whether learners are competent in English or not. This, therefore, puts teachers in a difficult position as they attempt to make their lessons understood by learners from different language backgrounds, who struggle to use and understand the English language. Ideally, for pedagogical reasons, teachers should be able to use a language in which learners are competent for instruction in school. But, in the case of Namibia, schools have to heed the calls of government to popularise English, even when they themselves are not proficient in the English language.

Teachers' awareness of the matrix-embedded model

The teachers responded to two questions about whether they were aware of the matrix-embedded model and the possible successful implementation of such a model in the Namibian Grade 10 ESL classrooms.

Three of the ESL teachers indicated that they were aware of the matrix-embedded model, while seven said they were not. As far as the implementation of the matrix-embedded model was concerned, six teachers indicated that such a model could be implemented successfully in Grade 10 English-medium classrooms in Namibia.

The matrix-embedded model on the acquisition of the English Language (EL)

As the researchers set out to carry out this study, it was hypothesised that a model existed in the literature that could address the communication barriers in the Namibian classrooms since English as a Second Language was used as a medium of instruction and yet learners' and teachers' English language proficiency was low. It should be pointed out that learners experience challenges where a second language is used as a medium of instruction. However, to deny learners the use of their mother tongue in the classroom is regarded as another form of discrimination (Freira, 1985). Therefore, a more balanced approach is the best route to take, in such a situation. It is for this reason that the matrix-embedded model was advanced. The Grade 10 ESL teachers' comments on the effects of the matrix-embedded model for the acquisition of the English language in the subjects that they taught varied.

Three teachers felt that the matrix-embedded model could be an effective way of learning and teaching a language and that the target language would be learnt better since the mother tongue would be minimised. One teacher argued that the matrix-embedded model was appropriate as it would foster the acquisition of the target language and enhance content understanding.

Advantages and disadvantages of the matrix-embedded model

Table 14.1 presents the advantages and disadvantages of the matrix-embedded model of English language teaching and learning, as envisaged by the Grade 10 ESL teachers.

Nine of the teachers (A2, A3, A4, A6, A7, A8, A10, A11 and A12) felt that the matrix-embedded model would enhance the understanding of the content matter and would alert learners to English grammar rules. They claimed that the matrix-embedded model would foster unity among learners from different ethnic and cultural groups. They indicated that the matrix-embedded model would make learning easier as learners would understand topics and contribute to classroom discussions. However, seven teachers (A2, A3, A4, A7, A10, A11 and A12) argued that the matrix-embedded model would limit the use of the target language and create dependence on the mother tongue (see Table 14.1).

The implementation of the matrix-embedded model

The ESL teachers commented on the success and failure of the implementation of the matrix-embedded model in Grade 10 English-medium classrooms in Namibia.

Six Grade 10 Second Language teachers felt that the implementation of the matrix-embedded model could be successful, while three said no. Unfortunately, this study did not venture into eliciting the reasons for the negative responses by the three teachers.

Table 14.1: Advantages and disadvantages of the matrix-embedded model of the English language

Teacher	Advantages	Disadvantages
A2	Learners will understand the subject matter very well, which can lead to mastery of the content being presented.	The matrix-embedded model does not enable learners to progress in English language usage and limits vocabulary expansion.
A3	Learners become aware of grammar rules in both the mother tongue and the English language.	Does not create awareness of the differences in grammar rules in both languages.
A4	The matrix-embedded model can be effective. It has both vocabulary and written structures.	Creates confusion of structure from one language to another and grammar rules. The matrix-embedded model creates confusion of structures and grammar and syntax from one language to another.
A6	The learners can master the grammar rules and learn the basic rules of language structures.	Code-switching might not have an effect on the target language.
A7	The matrix-embedded model helps learners from different language groupings to understand one another better.	It makes the mother tongue dominate because learners would never want to speak the English language.
A8	Learners come from different cultures and languages; therefore English can make it easier for them to understand one another.	The matrix-embedded model discourages those learners who cannot express themselves well in English from participating.
A10	English as a subject to be taught and learned shall accomplish its learning objectives.	The matrix-embedded model creates dependency on the mother tongue.
A11	The matrix-embedded model makes the foreign language easier.	The mother tongue derails the learning of the English language as the mother tongue dominates.
A12	The matrix-embedded model helps to improve learners' performance, as learners really understand the topic and contribute to discussions in class.	If the mother tongue is used often, it will become the norm, thus affecting learners' performance negatively.

Source: Compiled from the study

Obstacles to the implementation of the matrix-embedded model

Table 14.2 presents the envisaged obstacles to the successful implementation of the proposed matrix-embedded model in Grade 10 English-medium classrooms.

Table 14.2: Obstacles to the successful implementation of the matrix-embedded model

Teacher	Responses
A2	Translation will be an obstacle as terminologies are not available in some mother tongues.
A3	The influence of one language over the other language(s).
A4	No obstacles, just a matter of updating or reviewing the language policy.
A6	Learners might not have the basics of grammar right from the primary phase (Grades 1 to 7).
A7	Lack of learners' participation and learners' shyness might hamper the English language learning process.
A8	Technology: learners are able to express themselves fluently in English when they are talking, but when they write, they use American English and SMS language.
A10	Abuse of code-switching and misinterpretation of the purpose of code-switching in an English-medium classroom might affect the learning of the English language.
A11	Teachers might fear losing their jobs if they are found code-switching by school managers and phobia of the proposed matrix-embedded model in schools.

Source: Compiled from the study

Various responses were given by four ESL teachers (A3, A4, A10 and A11) on the obstacles affecting the implementation of the matrix-embedded model. The obstacles ranged from xenophobia to fear of losing jobs and misinterpretation of government policies. Four teachers (A2, A6, A7 and A8) argued that it would require the revision of the language policy and translation would be an obstacle to the use of the matrix-embedded model (see Table 14.2).

Teachers' comments on the needed changes to the existing language policy to facilitate the use of the matrix-embedded model

Teachers are catalysts of change in education. They are implementers of official policy in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to hear their views on the existing Language Policy for Schools in Namibia. Their views are contained in Table 14.3.

Table 14.3: Proposed recommendations to the language policy and reasons

Teachers	Responses
A1	I want to change the implementation of code-switching hence it makes learners understand the content better because sometimes they do not follow only when a teacher switches codes.
A2	All school learners should know how to speak English because it is the official language and the medium of instruction in Namibia.
A4	English should be used most of the time and the mother tongue should be used minimally in all the grades.
A6	English should be taught from pre-primary school and should become the medium of instruction in the teaching and learning process in all phases.
A7	I recommend that English should be taught properly at lower primary for learners to have a proper foundation.
A8	English as the medium of instruction should not start from primary phase, but it should start from pre-primary phase for learners to acquire all the necessary skills in English, therefore pre-primary teachers' qualifications need to be upgraded and in-service training should be revamped.
A10	English remains the only medium of instruction in the Namibian school, nothing else, no code-switching should be allowed.
A11	I would support the idea.

Source: Compiled from the study

The teachers' responses to this question fell into four categories. Two teachers (A1 and A4) claimed that the language policy should include the aspects of code-switching. Two other teachers (A2 and A10) suggested that the status quo should remain, while another pair (A6 and A8) called for the early immersion programme (see Table 14.3), where English is used as a medium of instruction from pre-primary onwards, claiming that such a programme would enhance the acquisition

of English. Lastly, one teacher (A7), advocated for the proper teaching of English to build a better foundation.

To determine whether teachers used the mother tongue in their classrooms, and the frequency with which this was done, one of the researchers observed the lessons of all the ESL teachers in the sample. Each respondent was observed three times, totalling 36 observations in all. Figure 14.1 shows the data that were gathered through observing the lessons.

The language that sets the syntax of the sentence

Figure 14.2 presents the results from Part B of this study done at the 12 sampled schools in the Caprivi (now Zambezi) Education Region. In Part B, data were gathered through lesson observations focusing on the language that set the grammar of the sentence, the syntax and the frame of the switched projections by the Grade 10 ESL teachers.

It was observed that while explaining concepts, teaching grammar and providing background information, in all 36 observations, English set the grammar of the sentence. The mother tongue formed the syntax of the sentence in the following situations: once when commenting on the language, three times when giving feedback, twice when giving instructions, four times when checking learners' comprehension and six times when managing and controlling learners (see Figure 14.2).

Discussion of the results

The matrix-embedded model

The researchers then looked at the language that sets the syntax and the grammar of the sentence. The matrix-embedded model is a teaching strategy — an approach, method or a combination of carefully designed classroom interactions — that can be followed meticulously to teach a topic or an idea. Even though teachers claimed that they were not aware of the matrix-embedded model, the observations in this study revealed that they were already employing this model, using English as the matrix language and the mother tongue as the embedded language when they code-switched in their classrooms.

The matrix-embedded model for the acquisition of the EL

Although the language policy is clear as to which language should be used in the classroom, the researchers wanted to find out, through classroom observations, which language the teachers activated in their teaching (that is, the matrix language). Three respondents felt that the matrix-embedded model could be an effective way of learning and teaching a language and that the target language would be learned better since the mother tongue would be minimised. According to Martin et al (2003), the speaker's choice is informed by both sociolinguistic and
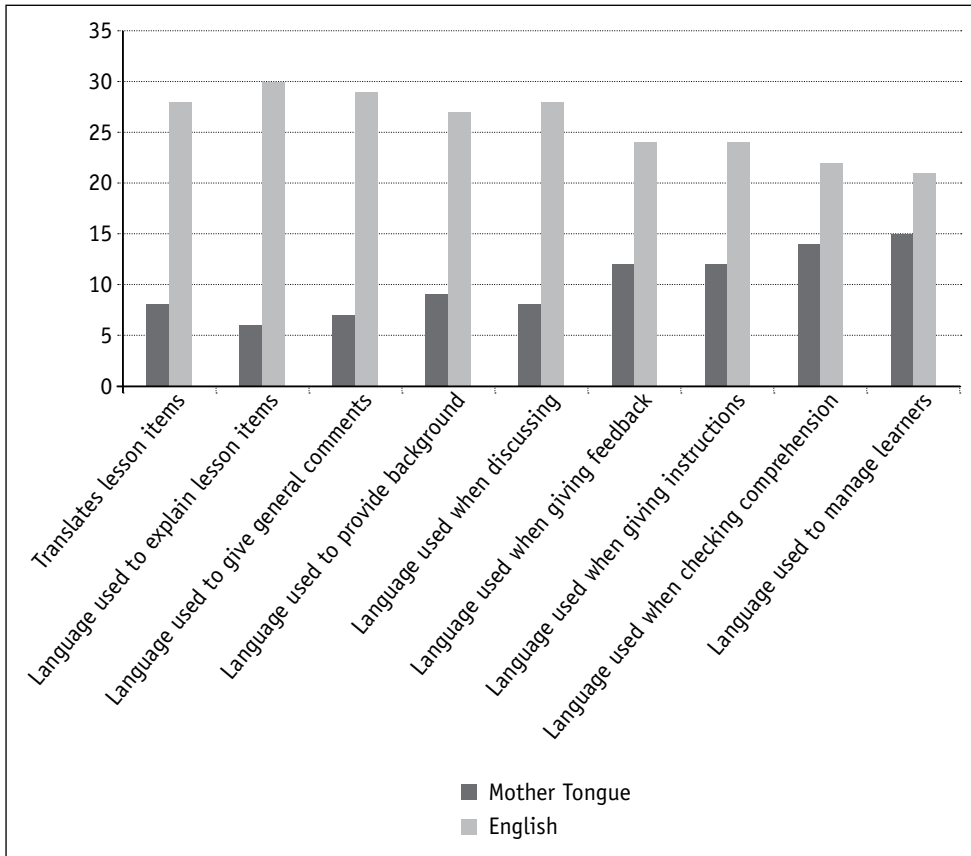
Figure 14.1: What the teacher does through utterances

Source: Compiled from the study

psychological factors. In sociolinguistic terms in the Caprivi (Zambezi) Region, the English language should have been the embedded language and the mother tongue the matrix language. However, due to the Language Policy for Schools in Namibia, it was observed that English was the matrix language and the mother tongue was the embedded language in the classroom. However, as the mother tongue was the dominant language, it should have donated the vocabulary and grammatical elements to English.

Teachers' awareness of the matrix-embedded model

Seven ESL teachers said that they were not aware of the matrix-embedded model; however, they claimed that such a model could result in a lack of progress and limited vocabulary in the target language, confusion of language structures, and create a dependency syndrome which would negatively affect learners'
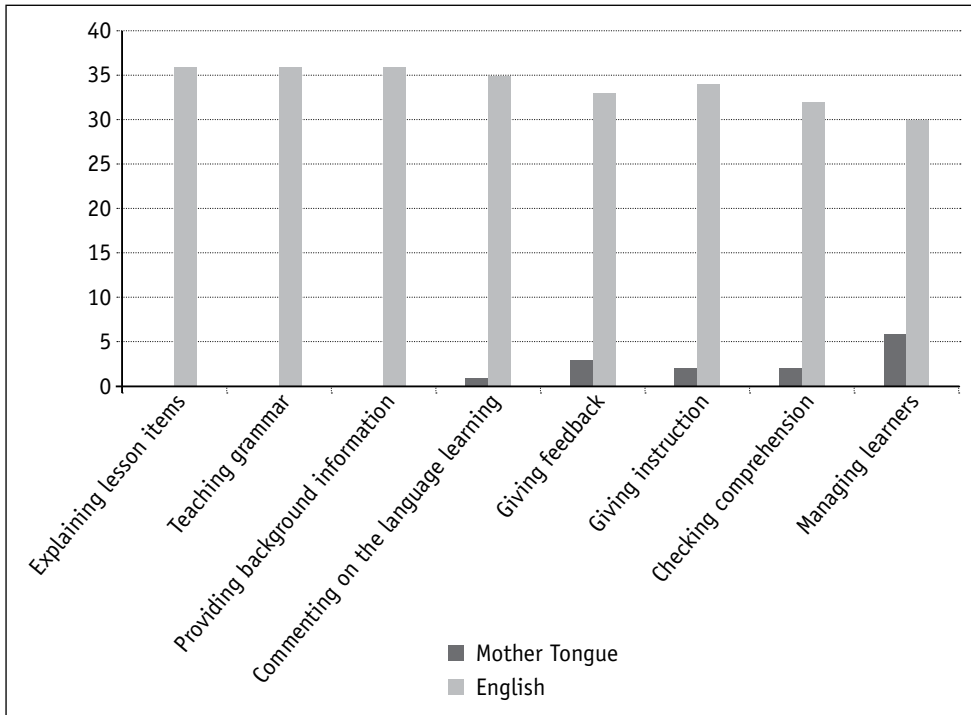
Figure 14.2: The language that sets the grammar of the sentence structure
Source: Compiled from the study

performance in examinations. Three Grade 10 ESL teachers agreed that they were aware of this model and claimed that it could bring about effective learning through the use of the mother tongue, and that the English grammatical structures could be learned as the mother tongue could aid comprehension. On the issue of the successful implementation of this model in Namibian schools, six teachers agreed that it could be implemented successfully, while three disagreed.

Six teachers' responses revealed that they were not aware of the matrix-embedded model, but were of the view that it would create the transference of grammatical mistakes, while three indicated that such a model could be an effective way of learning the English language. Through classroom observations, however, the researcher discovered that the ESL teachers were, knowingly or unknowingly, using the matrix-embedded model. The teachers used the sentence structures of English and embedded their learners' mother tongue. This model was seen as an alternative teaching technique in Namibian ESL classrooms. Lastly, ESL teachers' understanding of the matrix-embedded model influenced the way in which it was implemented in the classroom.

The language that sets the syntax of the sentence

The researchers wanted to find out which language set the grammar of the sentence, the syntax and the frame of the switched projection in Namibian ESL classroom. In all 36 observations, English set the grammar of the sentences when teachers were explaining concepts, teaching grammar and providing background information. In one observation, the mother tongue formed the syntax of the sentence, three times when giving feedback, twice when giving instructions, four times when checking learners' comprehension and six times when managing and controlling the learners.

Where code-switching was used in the ESL classrooms, English set the grammar, syntax and the frame of the projection. In many English lessons, the teachers focused on vocabulary borrowing and grammar, and English set the syntax and language structure when teaching grammar, vocabulary formation or pronunciation. However, there was a change when it came to commenting on the language learning and giving feedback, giving general instructions, checking comprehension and the management/control of learners, where the mother tongue formed the matrix language in nine occurrences.

Advantages and disadvantages of the matrix-embedded model

Although the majority (seven) of the ESL teachers had indicated that they were not aware of the matrix-embedded model, 10 listed the advantages of this model in an English-medium classroom and nine gave its disadvantages.

It can be argued that although teachers were not sure of the matrix-embedded model, they had an understanding of what it might be judging from the advantages and disadvantages they mentioned. Some of their responses suggested that they needed to be educated on the matrix-embedded model, which advocates for the use of English sentence structures. Some of the disadvantages they listed are actually the advantages of the matrix-embedded model, especially comparing grammar and sentence structures. One can, therefore, conclude that if teachers were more informed about the matrix-embedded model, they might use the concept in their ESL classrooms.

The implementation of the matrix-embedded model

Table 14.2 presents the ESL teachers' comments on the implementation of the matrix-embedded model in Grade 10 English-medium classrooms. Six felt that for successful implementation of the matrix-embedded model, teachers needed to be trained on how to handle code-switching.

Teachers perceived obstacles to the implementation of the matrix-embedded model

Four ESL teachers envisaged various obstacles to the implementation of the model (Table 14.2), ranging from xenophobia and fear of losing jobs to misinterpretation

of government policies. Some respondents argued that it would require a revision of the language policy, that translation would be an obstacle and that there is a myth attached to the use of the mother tongue in English-medium classrooms by those who hold to the exclusive use of the target language (Jingxia, 2010).

These views are supported by Snyder, Bolin and Zumwalt (1992) and Creese and Blackledge (2010), who note that a multitude of factors residing within the social fabric of a particular social setting impact the successful implementation of a new idea. Accordingly, judging from the various responses given by the teachers, a concerted effort is needed for teachers to embrace the use of the matrix-embedded model in Namibian schools. Indeed, as Ritgerð and Einar (2013) observe, the teacher is an important cog in the second-language learning process; without their active teaching and use of the second language, learners would struggle to become competent in its use.

Conclusion

A recurring theme in the teachers' responses to the introduction of the matrix-embedded model was that they felt threatened by the new innovation. Teachers need to be encouraged and supported in implementing any new innovation for the curriculum to be successful (Alsubaie, 2016). Alsubaie suggests the provision of 'training and workshops, which are geared toward professional development to be able to contribute to curriculum development' (2016: 107). This also applies to the ESL teachers in this study for them to implement the matrix-embedded model in the teaching of English to learners whose mother tongue is not English. If teachers feel that the matrix-embedded model is being imposed on them from above, they may passively resist implementing the model. Fullan (1993) places the school at the centre of innovation and change, and says that if schools are to flourish, decentralisation is the way to go as it leads to active participation, relevance, ownership, increased commitment and motivation from those implementing the change.

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Improving the implementation of South African laws relating to multilingualism in education

Kolapo Omidire

Introduction

Constitutional provisions guarantee rights, and any person who feels that his right has been breached or is threatened may approach the courts for protection.[1] In relation to language, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter the Constitution), contains comprehensive provisions in section 6 — highlighting the challenges of the country's historical past — regarding indigenous languages. The Constitution makes specific provisions to regulate the use of all languages spoken in the country, including those spoken by minorities, and makes it mandatory that 'the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages', while municipalities are required to 'take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents'.[2] Furthermore, the Constitution mandates the national and provincial governments to regulate and monitor the use of official languages by legislation and other measures.[3]

In relation to language for education, section 29(2) of the Constitution provides, inter alia, that 'everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions', thereby elevating the choice of language for educational purposes to a fundamental right with a place in the Bill of Rights. The essence of the constitutional provisions relating to language and to language in education is that the Constitution plainly

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1   See *Ex parte: Gauteng Provincial Legislature in re: Dispute Concerning the Constitutionality of Provisions of the Gauteng Schools Bill* 1996 (3) SA 165 (CC).

2   See section 6 of the Constitution.

3   See section 6(4) of the Constitution. The statutory provisions and government policies relevant to the subject of multilingualism in education are discussed later in this chapter.

acknowledges multilingualism as a distinctive characteristic of South African society, distinguishing the Constitution from other constitutions globally, and placing indigenous languages at the centre of transformation and development (Serfontein, 2013: 16). Indeed, there is international acknowledgment of the unique nature of the constitutional recognition of the right to language of own choice in South Africa, as a remedy for past practices of exclusion and oppression (Marback, 2002: 355).

Although the Constitution contains copious provisions on language and multilingualism, appropriately supplemented by legislation and policies, the implementation of constitutional and statutory requirements has been subject to challenges over the years. Studies show that some state officials responsible for the execution of the law and implementation of policies hardly understand the underlying jurisprudential rationale for the provisions or, in some cases, are entirely ignorant of them (Beckman & Prinsloo, 2015: 3). The courts have been called upon on a few occasions to resolve disputes arising in the course of implementation, and through judicial precedents, the courts have succeeded in clearing the 'murky waters of the shared space' between the various stakeholders.[4] The benefit of the intervention of the courts lies in the fact that as the watchdog for justice, they are able to apply the rules to ensure that people are protected from potential abuse and, as may be necessary, to apply constitutional provisions to uphold the rights of persons who may be adversely affected by acts of others (Bray, 2009: 155).

Consequent on the foregoing, the thrust of this chapter is to critically examine the law in relation to multilingualism in education. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section briefly discusses the challenges of multilingualism, especially in relation to education, from the perspective of human rights. As language rights are fundamental, this signifies that some interests are protected by a legal rule, and when interests conflict, the state has a duty to balance competing rights by applying the law to facilitate the implementation of the law (Twining & Miers, 2010: 150). The second section critically examines the legal framework comprising constitutional and statutory provisions relevant to the subject with a view to determining their effectiveness. This is achieved by a review and discussion of case law relevant to the constitutional and legislative provisions on multilingualism in education, to assess the disposition of South African courts regarding the interpretation of the law. This will facilitate a projection into the future as to what factors are necessary to secure the protection and enforcement of the fundamental rights relating to multilingualism in education. Finally, the third section assesses the subject matter to stimulate recommendations for an improved realisation of the objectives underlying the law relating to multilingualism in education as a fundamental right in South Africa.

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4   See *Federation of Governing Bodies for South African Schools v Member of the Executive Council for Education, Gauteng and Others* 2016 ZACC 14 at para 4.

Multilingualism in education and human rights

The inclusion of provisions on language and multilingualism, including those relating to education, in the Bill of Rights reinforces their importance as rights which bind 'the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and all organs of state'.[5] The state is accordingly required to 'respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights'.[6] That inclusion therefore creates an opportunity for people to be agents of the change envisaged by the Constitution, given that it is by asserting those rights that transformation can be accomplished (Beirne, 2005: 44).

The issue of education in a multilingual state is one of the thorniest and most difficult issues facing postcolonial states (Ribeiro, 2010: 25). In many African states, the mismatch between home and school languages has remained a burden of colonial legacy, whereby foreign languages in formal and official domains have dominated over local languages for a long period (Benson, 2016: 3). Poor performance or even total exclusion of pupils from education in many such countries have been linked to learning (or examination) in a language other than the mother tongue or the home language (Pinnock & Vijayakumar, 2009: 11). In South Africa, continued domination of English and Afrikaans in learning and teaching has consequences for African language speaking learners (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017: 133). For example, the hegemony of the English language in the orientation and development of the colonial-era African leaders, more or less resulted in the restricted development of a reading culture, creative writing and other scholarly endeavours in the local South African languages (Alexander, 2003: 10.)

Government has, however, been taking steps to counter the domination of English as the language of learning in South Africa, in pursuit of the objective of the Language in Education Policy 1997 (LiEP), and to ensure that the right to choose the language of learning and teaching, vested in the individual, is exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism.[7] Unfortunately, language planning and policy-making has always been an arena for struggle, typically resulting in 'benefits for some, and loss of privilege, status and rights for others' (UNICEF, 2016). This is because policies have ideological undertones, making it possible for competing interest groups to make interpretations reflective of the power-play relationship between them (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017: 134). However, policies must reflect the intention of Parliament, as expressed in legislation. In *Akani Garden Route (Pty) Ltd v Pinnacle Point Casino*

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5   Section 8(1) of the Constitution.

6   See section 7(2) of the Constitution.

7   See Preamble 6 of the Language in Education Policy 14 July 1997. Available at: https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Policies/GET/Language EducationPolicy1997.pdf?ver=2007-08-22-083918-000. (Accessed 29 June 2018).

(Pty) Ltd,[8] the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) expatiated on the difference between 'policy' and 'legislation'. The SCA pointed out that,

> *laws, regulations and rules are legislative instruments, whereas policy determinations are not. As a matter of sound government, in order to bind the public, policy should normally be reflected in such instruments. Policy determinations cannot override, amend, or be in conflict with laws (including subordinate legislation). Otherwise the separation between Legislature and Executive will disappear.*

Incidentally, in addressing similar concerns relating to language in education, the Constitutional Court observed that tensions caused by diverse interests and competing visions, especially in relation to children's education, could be well-adjusted by reference to constitutional provisions, and acting in the best interests of children.[9] Therefore, the starting point regarding a discourse on language rights in public education should be the constitutional provisions relevant to the subject,[10] and the legislative instruments that complement them.[11] The relevant constitutional and legislative instruments are considered in the following section.

Legal framework

Section 29(2) of the Constitution is the *fons et origo* of the right to multilingual education in South Africa. The wording of the provision necessitates that other provisions of the Constitution are relevant, and that their requirements may have a bearing on the enforcement of the sub-section. For example, the requirement regarding the implementation of the state's obligation enumerated in section 29(2) *(a)–(c)* may necessitate reference to section 1*(a)* and *(b)*, which enumerates some of the values on which the democratic state is founded; section 6 which contains provisions on the right to languages, section 9 on the right to equality, and section 28 on the rights of the child generally.

The Constitutional Court admonished against the practice of fragmenting provisions of the Bill of Rights in *Certification of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*,[12] pointing out that 'the phrase "fundamental rights, freedoms and civil liberties" should not be broken down into separate words and examined in

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8   2001 (4) SA 501 (SCA) at para. 7.

9   See *MEC for Education in Gauteng Province and Others v Governing Body of the Rivonia Primary School and Others* 2013 ZACC 34 at para 2.

10 See *Head of Department, Mpumalanga Department of Education and Another v Hoërskool Ermelo and Others* 2009 ZACC 32 at para 79.

11 The legislative framework relevant to the subject is discussed in the section on Legal framework.

12 1996 (4) SA 744 (CC) at para 50.

isolation [as] each word does bear a meaning, but the phrase as a whole conveys a composite idea that is firmly established in human rights jurisprudence'. However, an analysis of the constitutive elements of section 29(2) of the Constitution is essential to highlight the relevant issues, which can then be discussed with appropriate reference to the statutory provisions and the courts' pronouncements. This approach should, hopefully, make it possible to appreciate more fully the meaning and the underlying rationale for the constitutional provision. Section 29(2) of the Constitution provides that:

> *Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account —*
> a) *equity;*
> b) *practicability; and*
> c) *the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.*

The Constitution's declaration of 11 languages spoken in South Africa as official languages, together with the acknowledgement that indigenous languages have had a diminished status in the past, justifies the imposition of an obligation on the state 'to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the status of these languages'.[13] Regarding education, it is argued that languages develop faster and better when they are used in high domains such as education (Desai, 2010: 103), which perhaps underscores the constitutional provision in section 29(2). In the same vein, the South African Schools Act[14] (SASA) acknowledges in its preamble that the 'country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision' to, inter alia, 'advance democratic transformation of society' and also 'protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages'. To facilitate the realisation of this objective, section 6 of SASA makes provision to regulate the language policy of public schools as follows:

1. Subject to the Constitution and this Act, the Minister may, by notice in the *Government Gazette*, after consultation with the Council of Education

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13 Section 6(1) and (2) of the Constitution. National and provincial governments are mandated to use at least two official languages, while ensuring that all official languages 'enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably', with provisions made for the respect, promotion and development of other minority languages spoken in the country. See generally section 6 of the Constitution.

14 Act No. 84 of 1996 [as amended].

> Ministers, determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools.
>
> 2. The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law.
>
> 3. No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing policy determined under this section.
>
> 4. A recognised Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school.[15]

Furthermore, the National Education Policy Act[16] (NEPA) authorises the Minister of Education to determine national education policy in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and NEPA, including the policy for language in education.[17] In relation to language in education, the National Education Policy is required to advance and protect the rights of every person guaranteed in terms of the Bill of Rights, in particular, the right 'of every student to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable'.[18]

A review of the constitutive elements of section 29(2) of the Constitution raises some issues which can be discussed with reference to relevant legislative instruments and case law, under the following sub-heads namely:

1. The right to education in the official language or languages of choice in public educational institutions;
2. Choice where it is reasonably practicable;
3. Relevant factors in the implementation of the right to language in education.

Right to education in the official language or languages of choice in public educational institutions

The right reserved for everyone by section 29(2) of the Constitution to receive education in an official language or languages at a public school, if practicable, is not a right to receive such education at each and every public educational institution, except if it is reasonably practical to do so.[19] Accordingly, the right

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15 Section 6B*(a)* of SASA further provides that 'the governing body of a public school must ensure that there is no unfair discrimination in respect of any official languages that are offered as subject options contemplated in section 21(1)*(b)*'.

16 Act No. 27 of 1996.

17 Section 3(4)*(m)* of NEPA.

18 See section 4(a)*(v)* of NEPA.

19 *The Western Cape Minister of Education and Others v The Governing Body of Mikro Primary Schools and Another* 2005 All SA 436 (SCA) at para 31.

will only be upheld depending on the relevant circumstances of each case, thereby imposing 'a context-sensitive understanding of each claim for education in a language of choice'.[20]

It stands to reason that the authority to be saddled with the responsibility of determining the language policy of a school should be reasonably representative of the various stakeholders in the education of learners in the catchment area of the school. Therefore, the *Governing Body Regulations for Public Schools*[21] prescribe requirements for the composition, term of office, duties and functions of school governing bodies, as well as other matters, to ensure that they are suited to perform their role effectively. Section 6(2) of SASA confers the responsibility to determine the language policy of a school on the school governing body (SGB).[22]

Though a school's language policy is within the purview of the SGB's functions, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and SASA, it does not take away the necessity of departmental supervision in ensuring that SGBs comply with the law.[23] In *Head of Department, Mpumalanga Department of Education and Another v Hoërskool Ermelo and Others*,[24] the respondent had contended that the school's language policy, which had remained fixed as exclusively Afrikaans for over 93 years, was wrongfully changed by the Head of Department (HOD). The HOD had purportedly withdrawn the function of the SGB in relation to the school's language policy in view of the fact that there were 113 non-Afrikaans-speaking learners who could not be admitted to the school because of the language policy, and thereafter conferred authority on an interim body, which instantly changed the policy to accommodate the stranded learners.[25] The Constitutional Court held that the statutory power in section 6 of SASA cannot be absolute. The Court observed that although section 6(1) of SASA authorises

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20 See *Head of Department, Mpumalanga Department of Education and Another v Hoërskool Ermelo and Others* 2009 ZACC 32 at para 52.

21 See, for example, the *Governing Body Regulations for Public Schools in Gauteng Province* published under GN 1457 of 1997, as amended.

22 See also *MEC for Education in Gauteng Province and Others v Governing Body of the Rivonia Primary School and Others* 2013 ZACC 34 at para 36, and *The Western Cape Minister of Education and Others v The Governing Body of Mikro Primary Schools and Another* 2005 All SA 436 (SCA).

23 See *Head of Department of Education, Free State Province v Welkom High School and Others* 2013 ZACC 25.

24 2009 ZACC 32.

25 The High Court had upheld the action of the HOD, but the SCA overruled the High Court, holding that the issue revolved around the rule of law based on section 6(2) of SASA, which did not contemplate the transfer of the SGB's functions to an interim body. The SCA thereupon set aside the HOD's withdrawal of the functions of the SGB and the reviewed language policy.

the Minister of Education to determine the norms and standards for language policy in public schools, the power to determine the language policy of a public school can only be exercised in accordance with section 29(2) of the Constitution. However, section 22 of SASA permits the HOD to withdraw the functions of the SGB on reasonable grounds, following set procedural fairness requirements,[26] 'in order to pursue a legitimate purpose'.[27] Any review of the power by the HOD in that regard has to:

> *consider carefully the nature of the [SGB's] function, the purpose for which it is revoked in the light of the best interests of actual and potential learners, the view and the nature of the power sought to be withdrawn as well as the likely impact of the withdrawal on the well-being of the school, its learners, parents and educators.*

The Constitutional Court thereupon held that the HOD had the power to withdraw the function of the SGB on reasonable grounds, and that 'once a function is properly withdrawn in terms of section 22(1), it vests in the HOD. Thereafter, the HOD is entitled, and duty bound to perform the function in furtherance of a specified goal permitted by the SASA'.[28] In this case, however, the transfer of the SGB's function to an interim body and the consequent decision of that body were held to be invalid.

Choice where it is reasonably practicable

The rights relating to language and education are typically classified in the group of socio-economic rights, which may not necessarily be justiciable[29] on the grounds that they are incapable of an unequivocal declaration, as in civil and political rights and, at best, any enforcement thereof requires resources that can only be assessed by the political arms of the government like the executive or the legislature (Christiansen, 2007: 321). While it is recognised that the borderline between the different rights is fluid, and that scholars often adopt a categorisation in human

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26 Ermelo at para 63.

27 Ermelo at para 68.

28 Ermelo at para 88.

29 'Justiciability' in relation to a right connotes the ability to claim a remedy in respect of the violation, or threat of violation, of the subject's right before an independent and impartial body. Remedy may be procedural in terms of an effective access to a court or tribunal capable of making a pronouncement to address the imminent or actual violation. It is substantive if the court or tribunal could award a reparation to the victim of the violation. See International Commission of Jurists (2008). *Courts and the Legal Enforcement of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*: 6.

rights law for convenience of discussion or analysis (Liebenberg, 2010: 35), in South Africa, the classification of rights does not in any way affect their significance.[30]

Furthermore, the argument that the reference of disputes relating to socio-economic rights to the courts 'may result in courts making orders which have direct implications for budgetary matters' does not necessarily affect enforcement, and neither does it impose a task upon the courts, which is different from that ordinarily conferred upon them by a Bill of Rights.[31] Indeed, the comprehensive approach to the protection and enforcement of human rights in South Africa, regardless of whether they are first, second or third generation rights, is acknowledged and recognised in global academic literature (Stein, 2013).

The LiEP made in terms of section 3(4)*(m)* of NEPA and the *Norms and Standards Regarding Language Policy* in terms of section 6(1) SASA have two objectives, which complement each other. They both emphasise the importance of multilingualism, urging an approach that makes being multilingual a defining characteristic of being South African.[32] Therefore, in determining language policy, relevant factors to be considered cannot be limited to the interests of the school and its current learners or their parents. The department also has to be proactive in its actions, for example, by procuring enough places for pupils and doing so timeously, rather than waiting until it becomes a problem. Furthermore, no form of racial discrimination may be practised in the determination and implementation of the policy.[33] Accordingly, in *Matukane and Others v Laerskool Potgietersrus*,[34] the court observed that the waiting list contained only the names of what appeared to be Afrikaans-speaking children but none of the black children who had applied for admission, indicating that the respondent may have deemed the non-Afrikaans-speaking learners unfit for consideration for admittance to the school.

A decision taken regarding the change of the language policy of a public school is an administrative action and it is subject to review under the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (No. 3 of 2000) (hereafter PAJA)[35] and if upon review,

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30 The classical categorisation of rights has been criticised on the grounds that they do not address the typical African challenges relating to rights, and that it would be more beneficial if the typology reflected the African context, taking into account all the rights protected in the African Charter. See Mubangizi (2004). Towards a new approach to the classification of human rights with specific reference to the African context. *African Human Rights Law Journal*: 101.

31 See Certification of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (4) SA 744 (CC) at para 77.

32 See the preamble to LiEP.

33 See section 6(3) of SASA.

34 1996 1 All SA 468 (T).

35 See *The Western Cape Minister of Education and Others v The Governing Body of Mikro Primary Schools and Another* 2005 All SA 436 (SCA) at para 36.

it is found that no reasonable person would in the circumstances have refused to change the language policy, it may be reviewed or even set aside.[36] The exercise of powers by public officers must be in good faith, but if an officer had 'acted *mala fide* or from ulterior and improper motives, if he had not applied his mind to the matter or exercised his discretion at all, or if he had disregarded the express provisions of a statute — in such cases the court might grant relief'.[37]

Relevant factors in the implementation of the right to language in education

Section 29(2) provides, inter alia, that to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, the right of choice in education language, 'the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account equity, practicability, and the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices'. The rationale behind human rights protection is to contribute to human development by guaranteeing an environment in which opportunities for the good life are made available to everyone. The Constitution requires that administrative action should be guided by the principle of fairness to facilitate the achievement of a more equitable education system.[38] Sometimes it may be necessary to adopt a holistic approach, mindful of the needs of the larger society in the management of finite resources, rather than focusing on the specific needs of particular individuals, thereby unavoidably compromising the full protection of an individual's rights.[39]

Section 29(2) of the Constitution identifies some values that could facilitate the implementation of the right, including equity, practicability, and the need to redress the injustices of the past. Furthermore, in rejecting the tenets of the disgraceful past of South Africa, the Constitution contains provisions that point the people to a 'vigorous identification of and commitment to a democratic, universalistic, caring and aspirationally egalitarian ethos [exposing] the contrast between the past which it repudiates and the future to which it seeks to commit the nation'.[40] Accordingly, where necessary, the SGB of a school may resort to a single language medium provided such action does not adversely impact the values indicated in the sub-section, and does not perpetuate racial discrimination

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36   See section 6(2)*(h)* of PAJA.

37   *Seodin Primary School and Others v MEC of Education of the Northern Cape and Others* 2005 ZANCHC 6 at para 5.

38   See *The Premier, Province of Mpumalanga and Another v Executive Committee of the Association of Governing Bodies of State-Aided Schools*; Eastern Transvaal 1999 (2) SA 91 at para 20.

39   See *Soobramoney v Minister of Health (KwaZulu-Natal)* 1998 (1) SA 765 (CC) at para 31.

40   See *Jaftha v Schoeman and Others* 2005 (2) SA 140 (CC).

(Woolman, 2015: 2082). In the same vein, decisions relating to language in education must take into account the issue of equity, which is also a requirement of section 6(4) of the Constitution, that all official languages are to 'enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably'.

Equity requires fairness in action, and the requirement of procedural administrative fairness puts an administrator in a position where he or she has to assess issues with an open mind, seeing the whole picture of the facts and circumstances within which administrative action is to be taken.[41] Following therefrom, a court or tribunal has the power to judicially review an administrative action if the action was taken based on irrelevant considerations, or relevant considerations were not considered.[42] In *Seodin Primary School and Others v MEC of Education of the Northern Cape and Others*,[43] the court considered an application by the SGB, challenging the decision of the MEC to convert the single-medium Afrikaans schools in the Kuruman District and the Northern Cape Agricultural High School to double-medium Afrikaans and English schools. The court held that although section 6(2) of SASA confers on the SGB the function to determine the language policy of the school, subject to the Constitution, SASA, and any applicable provincial law, 'the department and the MEC are not required or obliged to rubber-stamp a language policy that offends against the legal precepts set out in the afore-quoted legislation'.[44] The court thereupon dismissed the application. The Constitutional Court also affirmed the same principle in *Federation of Governing Bodies for South African Schools v Member of the Executive Council for Education, Gauteng, and Another*[45] rejecting the contention of unconstitutionality in situations where provincial legislation conflicts with national legislation in relation to education, because education is a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence.[46]

The Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill 2015,[47] (the Draft Amendment Bill) contains provisions conceptualised to guide the exercise of the powers created by section 29(2) of the Constitution in terms of relevant factors to be taken into consideration. Clause 4 of the Bill proposes the amendment of section 6 of SASA by introducing a process to regulate the adoption of a public school's language policy, whereby the SGB is required to submit its language policy or amendment

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41 See *Janse van Rensburg NO and Another v Minister of Trade and Industry NO and Another* 2001 (1) SA 29 at para 24.

42 See section 6(2)*(e)*(iii) of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (No 3 of 2000).

43 2005 ZANCHC 6.

44 See Seodin at para 57.

45 2016 ZACC 14 at para 26.

46 See Schedule 4 Part A to the Constitution.

47 No 41178 *Staatskoerant*, 13 Oktober 2017.

thereof to the HOD for approval.[48] In arriving at a decision, the HOD must consider 'the language needs, in general, of the broader community in which the school is located, and must take into account the following factors, not limited to:

a) The best interests of the child, with emphasis on equality, as provided for in section 9 of the Constitution and equity;

b) The dwindling number of learners who speak the language of learning and teaching at the public school; and

c) The need for effective use of classroom space and resources of the public school.

Furthermore, clause 4(10) of the Draft Amendment Bill contains factors to be considered in determining whether or not it is practicable for a public school to have more than one language of instruction.' However, while the provision of factors in the Bill may guide action and decisions, the requirement to submit a school's language to the HOD for approval may create a bureaucracy, considering the number of schools that each HOD has to deal with. Perhaps it would be more beneficial if SGBs are required to take the factors into consideration in determining language policies, the failure of which may result in the invalidity of a non-complying language policy.

Assessment and conclusion

Although the existence of constitutional and legislative instruments is laudable, there is still a wide gap between the requirements of the content of the instruments and the actual practices in the classrooms and lecture halls across the country (Alexander, 2003: 15). This is evident in many of the disputes that have been brought before the courts regarding the instruments.[49] Some of the disputes relate to the determination of language policies of schools, which has been held to be socially and legally complex as they touch on the intricate interrelationship

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48 The policy is reviewable every three years or whenever the factors referred to above have changed, and if necessary, the HOD 'may direct a public school to adopt more than one language of instruction, where it is practicable to do so'.

49 See the following cases which are considered in this chapter, for example: *HOD, Department of Education, Free State Province v Welkom High School and Others* 2014 (2) SA 228 (CC); *HOD, Mpumalanga Department of Education and Another v Höerskool Ermelo and Another* 2009 ZACC 32; *HOD, Department of Education, Limpopo v Settlers Agricultural High School and Others* 2003 ZACC 15; *Seodin Primary School and Others v MEC of Education of the Northern Cape and Others* 2005 ZANCHC 6; and *Gauteng Provincial Legislature ex parte Dispute Concerning the Constitutionality of Provisions of the Gauteng Schools Bill* 1996 (3) SA 165 (CC).

between the rights of an SGB to make decisions and the need for transformation to overcome racial and gender imbalances in education.[50]

Unfortunately, the Pan South African Language Board Act[51] (hereafter PanSALB Act) enacted in terms of the requirement of section 6(5) of the Constitution has not been effective in addressing the constitutional responsibilities entrusted to the Board. PanSALB's functions are, inter alia, to 'assist with and monitor the formulation of programmes and policies aimed at fostering the equal use of and respect for the official languages, while taking steps to ensure that communities using the languages referred to in section 6(5) of the Constitution have the opportunity to use their languages in appropriate circumstances'.[52] Furthermore, the PanSALB is also entrusted with the investigation 'on its own initiative or on receipt of a written complaint, any alleged violation of a language right, language policy or language practice in terms of section 11'.[53] Unfortunately however, the PanSALB hardly featured in many of the disputes relating to language in education considered by the courts. That is probably not a surprise. A damning report on PanSALB by the Auditor General indicated that PanSALB was riddled with widespread corruption and mismanagement, which resulted in the Minister of Arts and Culture dissolving the board in January 2016 on the ground that it could neither oversee nor implement its constitutional and legislative functions effectively (Thamm, 2016).

The importance of the inclusion of the right of language in education should not be underestimated. It can engender positive change in society, particularly for the development of the people who, when encouraged to assert themselves, could attain their self-actualisation through the enforcement of those rights. Social and economic rights are the specific rights relevant to people's conditions, and which play a pivotal role in guiding the courts towards the consideration of values and material realities of the society in the interpretation of those rights (Liebenberg, 2010: 45). Therefore, law is not just a set of rules but a cultural phenomenon, which incorporates a range of considerations, presumptions and expectations, which if applied properly can 'help reveal the historical and societal context that shapes the interpretation and development of the law' (Webber, 2004: 27).

While vexatious and time-wasting litigation should not be encouraged, it is important for those who are at the short end of the stick in relation to language rights to seek enforcement of their rights. The potential positive effects of litigation on language rights include the provision of clarity of issues as the cases considered have shown (Beckman & Prinsloo, 2015: 5).

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50 *HOD, Department of Education, Limpopo v Settlers Agricultural High School and Others* 2003 ZACC 15 at para 12.

51 Act No 59 of 1995.

52 See section 8(1)(*j*)(iii) of the PanSALB Act.

53 See section 8(1)(*i*) of the PanSALB Act.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding the enabling constitutional and legislative instruments, learners and their parents, whose mother tongue is not English, appear to have no problem choosing to be taught in English, despite section 29(2).[54] While many of the speakers of indigenous languages in South Africa consider their languages as part of their cultural identity, the realisation of the goal envisaged in section 29(2) is hampered by the fact that people still largely opt for English as the official language to be educated in (Serfontein, 2013: 24). The effect of this is that many of the inequalities of the past may persist, and the legacy of mainly English as a medium of instruction will continue, despite paper policies encouraging the use of mother tongue languages in education (Desai, 2010: 10).

If the positive changes envisaged in the Constitution and legislative instruments in relation to languages in general, and language in education in particular, are to take place, LiEP must be driven towards the realisation of the changes by the state through appropriate agencies. This is because languages develop faster and better when they are used as the media of instruction in education.

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54   See Ermelo at para 50.

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