

Living through Languages

An African Tribute to René Dirven



Edited by
Christa van der Watt



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René Dirven

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Introduction

It is surely a measure of René Dirven's standing and reputation that students and colleagues would feel the need to pay tribute by regularly publishing collections of articles in his honour. In 1992, *Thirty years of linguistic evolution* appeared on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday (edited by Martin Pütz) and, in 1997, *Human contact through language and linguistics* was published to celebrate his 65th birthday (edited by Birgit Smieja and Meike Tasch). Now that we approach his 75th birthday, it is time to remind ourselves again of his contribution to the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics.

The current volume is meant specifically to commemorate René Dirven's influence in Africa through contributions by his students and colleagues who work and conduct research in Africa. These contributions carry with them the heartfelt gratitude of the authors who were inspired to work beyond the borders of their countries and address issues which affect the whole of Africa. Like René, and because of his encouragement, we grew accustomed to crossing borders, as he did almost daily from Belgium to Germany. For South Africans in particular, this was significant at a time when we had to take our place in Africa and contribute to its wellbeing, rather than continue the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. As the word *apartheid* indicates, we not only separated ourselves from our fellow South African citizens, but also from the rest of Africa. René was determined that the language problems and issues of Africa should be tackled cooperatively and he constantly urged us to take up this challenge.

René Dirven's biography and research foci, including his work in Africa, are well documented in the collections edited by Pütz (1992), and Smieja and Tasch (1997). The purpose of this *Introduction* is to demonstrate the way in which René's interests were continued since 1997 by scholars working and living in Africa. To this end I have taken the liberty of including quotations from articles by Dirven (and sometimes co-authors) at the top of each contribution to this volume to make the link with his work explicit. All the bibliographical detail for these quotations can be found in the list of references after this *Introduction*.

In 1986, René Dirven visited South Africa for the first time and set up contacts – which have lasted until today – with other European and African scholars. He created a network that still functions and grows as postgraduate students benefit from these contacts. The network is constantly rejuvenated and re-inspired at, among others, LAUD conferences and through international fellowships like the Von Humboldt Fellowship. Unfortunately we also lose contact and it is with great sadness that we heard that Prof Euforosibina Adegbija (Covenant University, Nigeria) had passed away in 2005. He would have contributed to this volume and it is poorer for his absence.

Academics in Africa, whether they are linguists or not, are confronted daily with the multilingual nature of their communities. For René, who comes from an officially trilingual country, and whose wife and children are as multilingual as he

is, this situation is normal. He has grappled with the challenges of multilingual societies from his earliest publications on ethnolinguistics in 1976 to his collaboration with Polzenhagen on rationalist and romantic models of language policy and globalisation (2004). These concerns are also taken up in this volume in the contributions by Blommaert, Du Plessis, and Batibo and Smieja. In these cases, the authors study the effect that political ideology and language policies have on the societies in which they function.

Blommaert describes the problems of matching idealised political constructions of identity with sociolinguistic realities in the case of the Ujamaa ideology in Tanzania. As in other African states, Tanzanian attempts to construct a national identity that is unique to their country have implications that are not always accounted for by the political proponents of these identities. Blommaert's article resonates with a LAUD publication by Dirven (1991), in which he "investigates the relationships between the social and political realities of language, cultural community and nation in an African context" (1991: 1). Dirven's exposition of the problems of matching cultural identity to African nations and states foreshadows Blommaert's conclusion that "the new Waswahili are not the old Waswahili, because language and culture do not seem to go as closely together as suggested in Ujamaa theory and subsequent Tanzanian scientific research" (this volume: 19). The failure of the Ujamaa ideology results, according to Blommaert, from "a view on language and culture derived from romantic culture philosophy" (this volume: 19), which in turn echoes Dirven and Polzenhagen's (2004: 40) discussion of romantic and rationalist models in language policy making, which concludes that "a group's social participation is ultimately, as its identity, dependent on a complex set of factors such as its historical experiences, its socio-economic status and its self-awareness".

In a similar vein, Batibo and Smieja discuss the effect of language policy on attitudes towards marginalised communities. Policy decisions are, of course, political decisions, and the problem of matching state and diverse cultural identities is often 'solved' by ignoring such diversity. This is the point made by Batibo and Smieja when they illustrate the way in which language policy in Botswana foreground Setswana and English, resulting in a negative evaluation of minority, Khoesan languages. Since these communities are so small, there is a distinct possibility of language shift and death. For most linguists, as well as in the context of Dirven's life and work, the loss of a language means the loss of knowledge and culture, since "any given nation has expressed its descent, its history, its culture, its contacts with other cultures and nations in its language" (Dirven, 1994: 4). Batibo and Smieja call for an "equitable language policy" (this volume: 33) with the express purpose of changing attitudes towards marginalised languages and increasing their and their speakers' chances of survival.

Whether such an effort will be successful is debatable in the light of Du Plessis' contribution on South African language policies, because it seems doubtful that "language policy and language planning (thus a language management approach) can change language practice" (this volume: 50). Building on Schiffman's (1998) discussion of the interplay between overt (or official) and covert language policy in multilingual countries, Du Plessis suggests that language planners should align

their policies with what happens on the ground, with “multilingualism from below” (this volume: 50). This focus on what *speakers* do with their languages is the point made by Mufwene (2002) and elaborated upon by Dirven and Polzenhagen (2004: 40) when they take issue with the “romantic model” with its tendency “to view languages as agents with a life of their own and to conflate language, language use, and language user”.

The contributions by Roos-Paula and Bobda touch on language acquisition in childhood. In the case of Roos-Paula, she describes the development of trilingualism in a qualitative study of her own children. The development of childhood multilingualism is a topic that is close to René Dirven’s heart, since it is also his own experience and that of his children and grandchildren. The fact that multilingualism is the norm in the majority of communities all over the world features repeatedly in his work. As Roos-Paula shows, children acquire an awareness of which language they should use to whom from a very early age and their code switching at this early age is far from random.

In the case of Bobda, a description of how urban Cameroonians acquire a ‘new’ mother tongue, which is usually a variety of a former colonial language, illustrates very neatly Dirven and Polzenhagen’s (2004: 40) point that “a group’s social participation is ultimately, as its identity, dependent on a complex set of factors such as historical experiences, its socio-economic status and its self-awareness”. Bobda adds his voice to a growing number of linguists from Africa (for example Bisong, 1995) who argue for the acceptance of former colonial languages, but in a way that serves Africa’s own best interests.

Two articles that are embedded in the Cognitive Linguistics tradition are those by Botha and Pütz. The latter answers a call by Dirven (among others) for a cognitive sociolinguistics by applying the rationalist and romantic approaches to the study of language use in Namibia. These two approaches or ideologies are proposed by Dirven and Polzenhagen (2004) and provide an instrument for the analysis of complex multilingual communities. Pütz uses them to argue convincingly for additive multilingualism. Botha uses a more traditional Cognitive Linguistics approach to analyse the concept of *racism* by looking at its use in terms of container and proximity schemata. In South African society, which is still grappling with its racist past, Botha’s conclusion that “individual awareness of discrimination results from the fact that it is conceptualised against different domains which overlap and interact in various and intricate ways” (this volume: 128) clearly shows the difficulty of identifying and dealing with racist actions.

The last section of this book is devoted to language teaching issues. René Dirven’s earliest publications focussed on language teaching and English language teaching in particular. In Webb’s article, he asks why African languages are not used in education. To a certain extent this question is evident in all of Dirven’s work on language, culture and identity in Africa: from the way in which our identities take shape and are shaped by the languages we speak and encounter, to the knowledge and science that disappears when we lose a language.

The article by Weideman touches on theoretical and ethical issues of language teaching and learning by proposing a more critical approach to the design of methods of teaching and testing language proficiency. This matter is also picked up in my article, where I try to show that African linguists and applied linguists need to develop a more critical awareness of what is presented as the norm in current language teaching pedagogy. This article is to some extent inward-looking, since I believe that the LiCCA initiative, after its promising start under René Dirven's leadership, ran into difficulties in 1997 and 1998, at least partly because of inner strife and the inability of scholars in Africa to overcome governmental and societal imbalances. In our critical stance towards current language teaching practices, Weideman and myself share Dirven's problems with certain elements of communicative language teaching (see Dirven on pedagogical grammar) and we both protest against "institutional replications of a dominant, repressive ideology" (Weideman, this volume: 160).

Although a volume of articles such as this one can never adequately represent the contribution that René Dirven has made and continues to make in Africa, we present it as testimony to the enormous influence he has on our scholarly lives.

Christa van der Walt
STELLENBOSCH

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Ujamaa and the creation of the new Waswahili

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...it is totally impossible in most cases to find any equation of cultural identity and national identity ... This means that in almost all cases there will be totally different allegiances to culture and to nation in Africa (René Dirven in Language, cultural community and nation in Africa, 1991).

Introduction

This paper will treat aspects of the way in which political ideology (in this case also state ideology) permeates language, language usage and scientific research, and how this relates to the construction of cultural identities. The target area is Tanzania, where Ujamaa politics was initiated after independence and formalised through the Arusha Declaration in 1967. A little known aspect of Ujamaa is its implicit cultural philosophy: a view on characteristics of man and society that is hardly ever clearly spelled out and has to be read between the lines.

There is, however, one clear entrance into this implicit culture-philosophical stance. Ujamaa was first and foremost a Swahili political ideology; it was articulated primarily in Swahili. "Swahili has played a very significant role in the development of political values and attitudes in Tanzania" (Abdulaziz, 1971: 164). Swahili furthermore, due to its status as a national language in Tanzania, featured as a quite prominent topos in much Ujamaa rhetoric. Bits and pieces of texts on Swahili as a national language and on the structure of the new society allow us to gather enough evidence on the linguistic ideology guiding attitudes toward Swahili as a language and as a marker of a cultural identity: that of the 'new Waswahili' in Tanzania. In the process, some of the semantic ambiguity of the concept of Mswahili will be explained, because, as I hope to demonstrate, the postcolonial struggle over definitions of the Mswahili – a political struggle in which Ujamaa has played a major part – has contributed to the fuzziness of the concept in Swahili scholarship. I hope that a better understanding of the ideological processes that have given rise to varying and sometimes conflicting notions of Swahili-ness will, to some extent, have a clarifying effect on our own scholarly usage of the concept. To follow a suggestion about African ethnic identities made by Vansina: "They are not givens and they do not necessarily correspond to homogeneous units of social institutions or culture" (Vansina, 1990:19). In other words, identities are only apparently clear, and the Waswahili are no exception to that rule.¹

¹ I am indebted to the participants in the 3rd Anglo-French Swahili Workshop for comments on

Identity, culture and ideology

For a clear understanding of the central argument of this paper, three concepts need to be clarified first: identity, culture and ideology. I will argue that, in the case of Ujamaa, *identities are ideologically constructed, using 'culture' as a central argument*. This ideological construction is realised through language usage, and language itself is an important symbol in the construction.

Language ideology has become a topic of growing interest in the social sciences in recent years (see the collections of Joseph & Taylor, 1990; Kroskrity *et al.*, 1992). In more than one way, the Silversteinian focus on 'metapragmatics' – conceptions of and talk about talk as expressions of underlying linguistic ideologies – has caused a theoretical shift in sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics, in which 'ideology' has come to stand for the mediating link between sociocultural structures and forms of talk (Woolard, 1992). This means that 'explanation' as a general concept to be used both object-oriented (analytically) as well as subject-oriented (reflexively) has received an emphatically ideology-related connotation: the driving forces behind sociocultural linguistic differentiation are sought in processes of ideological construction of the world. This paper will therefore investigate just one aspect of a now fragmented theoretical field: the aspect of state hegemony in the construction and distribution of (ideologically marked) forms of talk.² This rather abstract dimension of language-ideological processes cannot directly address issues such as contest and resistance at the level of everyday interaction between members of the speech community. Contest will appear in the struggle between conflicting local scholarly notions of Swahili-ness (Section 5 of the paper). Sociolinguistic observations on the rise of an English-interfered variant of Swahili published elsewhere (Blommaert & Gysels, 1987 and 1990; Blommaert, 1992) can, however, be adduced as evidence of the failure of the homogeneous state ideology on language described here, as well as of forms of resistance displayed in everyday handling of the 'official' linguistic ideology. Thus I suggest that the analysis of Ujamaa language ideology should not be read as a sketch of a rather smooth and uncontested exercise in hegemony and control, but rather as a description of an *attempt* towards increased control by the state.

Ideology, as the mediating link between sociocultural structures and forms of talk, calls for a peculiar view of seemingly self-evident concepts such as 'culture' and 'identity'. The view adopted in this paper is that neither the identity of a group of people (e.g. the Waswahili), nor their 'culture' (e.g. Swahili culture), are *a priori* givens that can be left unquestioned. Even for a region such as Africa, about which folk wisdom has taught us to think in terms of stable, traditional 'tribal' or 'ethnic groups', 'identity' and 'culture' have to be seen as *emerging* concepts, as

a previous version of this paper. Jef Verschueren, Michael Meeuwis and Gino Eelen also provided useful suggestions during an 'IPrA Forum' presentation of this paper. Relevant publications, to clarify some of the points left obscure in this paper, may be Blommaert 1988, 1990, 1991 and 1993. Data for parts of this paper were gathered during a short fieldwork stay in Tanzania in January-February 1992, which was made possible by a travel grant from the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research.

² Note also, that this, almost necessarily, is a top-down phenomenon restricted to the intellectual and political elites.

products rather than conditions. The relationship outlined above, viz. identities as ideologically constructed, with culture as an argument, will force me to treat both concepts more in terms of flexible stylistic and semantic repertoires, processes of reproduction, and processes of resistance and contest, than in terms of static features or characteristics. It will become clear that an 'identity' such as Mswahili is largely a subjective and political construct, and that this subjective dimension may either override available 'objective' identities, or enter into conflict with these objective identities. Crucial in this are two rhetorical strategies:

- ☞ *naturalising* new concepts by means of historical evidence;
- ☞ *legitimising* them by means of authoritative discourses such as science.

The net result of this analysis is a point which I think is most important for understanding the present-day sociocultural dynamics of East-African societies: the concept of 'Mswahili' today is a diversified concept, a complex of definitions, some of which refer to 'ethnic' – or 'objective' – identities, while others refer to 'subjective' or political identities.

The processes of ideological construction can only be understood *historically and ethnographically*. They prove to be extremely adaptable to differing circumstances, both group-external and group-internal ones. Crucial to our understanding of 'Swahili' identity in present-day Tanzania, is, in my view, the moment of national independence, because it triggered such large-scale social changes and invoked an apparent need for an 'identity' and a 'culture' as part of a general innovating and redefining process of state- and nation-building.

Background: independence and social change

Where does Swahili fit into the large-scale process of social and cultural change triggered by political independence? What has happened to the Waswahili, that age-old coastal sociocultural network, in the aftermath of the events that shook the foundations of the East-African societies?

First, we have to understand the depth of the impact of an event such as national independence. This is a phenomenon which, though noted and treated in a variety of well-known scholarly texts (e.g. Wallerstein, 1961), is not yet fully understood by (Western) outsiders. Being outsiders, we can only judge things *a posteriori*, on the basis of fragments of evidence such as texts or other 'modern' cultural artefacts and products.³ At the risk of sounding very behaviouristic, and aware of the inherent over-simplification, I will summarise some of the *a posteriori* findings in three main points.

- a. Independence meant the introduction of forms of power for Africans over *artificial and imported sociocultural entities, systems and structures*. The problematic nature of the nation-state is well known and well documented

³. For a lucid discussion on the rise and development of such cultural products in a postcolonial African society, see Fabian 1978. Other works of his, e.g. Fabian 1991, treat contemporary theatrical expression in Shaba-Swahili from the angle of cultural and political innovation.

(e.g. Mazrui, 1967a and, especially, 1967b), but even the very concept of 'politics' as a specialised, (quasi-) professional occupation **and** as a conceptual and semantic domain may be seen as alien to the traditions of those who came to be in charge of it after the tumultuous days of 1961. The problem is accurately located by Mazrui (1967a) as a matter of experience and cultural adaptation. Until independence, the only form of politics known to Africans was that of *opposition* to and resistance against the system of colonial rule. On the day of independence, however, a completely new style and perspective had to be adopted, and implemented: that of the statesman, that of constructive politics. Instead of attacking the existing sociopolitical fabric, it had to be defended, and largely on the basis of the premises rejected before independence. The field of tension is now clearly visible: 'politics', in the Western or 'modern' sense of the term, must have been something quite negative before independence, while it became the indisputable recipe for progress and development on the day of independence. That is why (to paraphrase Wallerstein, 1961: 86) African leaders felt compelled to explain to their people the fact that independence did not mean immediate wealth for all, nor the total absence of social control. The very meaning of a 'free and sovereign' *nation* must have been unknown to large groups in society.⁴

- b. Secondly, and in the wake of this conceptual shift, the whole complex of behaviour by politicians and citizens, as well as their mutual relationships, had to be adopted. Answers had to be found to questions such as: what is a 'representative' government, who is to be represented, and how? Given the simple facts that colonial rule almost automatically excluded Africans from the democratic and social rights normally assigned to citizens, and that by consequence the very notion of 'full citizenship' had little or no meaning to Africans beforehand, this must also have been something radically new and unrelated to previous 'political' experience.⁵
- c. Thirdly, if politics and the rules of behaviour related to it have to be adopted from scratch, and the 'state' or the 'nation' are fuzzy concepts, then how should the new labels indicating adherence to these new and artificial elements be filled? What should Tanzanians understand by their qualification as 'Tanzanian'? Is there any ground for loyalty (except for their joint participation in the struggle for independence) strong enough to unite ethnically, religiously and racially different people in a common cause: the state? Here we touch the paradox described by Alain Finkielkraut (1987): the joint effort of decolonisation created an 'us' which loses its legitimacy as soon

⁴ Wallerstein (1961, Chapter 5, pp.85ff.) presents an analysis of the dramatic shift in 'politics' after independence which I find germane. In a more moderate fashion, Mazrui and Tidy (1984: 374-5) formulate "two of the most pressing political challenges facing Africa" as "how to move from nationalism [i.e. the anticolonial, pro-independence ideology] to modern nationhood, and how to close the gap between statehood and nationhood."

⁵ Wallerstein (1961, but see also 1971) and Mazrui (1967b and 1978) also devote much attention to leadership in postcolonial African politics. Especially the role of intellectuals and the dilemma of tyranny have been constant themes in African political analysis. It also appears as a powerful theme in African prose literature.

as the struggle against the 'them' (the colonisers) is over. From then onwards, the artificiality of the pre-independent nation becomes apparent, and the internal logic of the underlying system of thought becomes counterproductive. If Africans have the right to affirm their identity and their virtues against those of their oppressors, then why should Katangans not affirm their separate identity against that of the other Congolese? And the Igbo against the other Nigerians, and the Gikuyu against the other Kenyans? Thus the idea of separateness and cultural relativity that was centripetal in the struggle for independence becomes centrifugal in the new states. As a matter of fact, the labels of 'Igbo' or 'Gikuyu' have a more natural ring than those of 'Nigerian' or 'Kenyan', both latter labels being based on distinctions made by the colonial oppressor.⁶

Not surprisingly therefore, the struggle for nation-building – a target for which enormous amounts of effort have been spent in Tanzania – was primarily fought over the construction of a set of new social identities, a phenomenon also noticed with reference to the creation of modern European states by Hobsbawm (1990). Cohesion, the sense of belonging together, was a major tool for establishing state authority and efficiency in ruling: "governments had a considerable domestic interest in mobilizing nationalism among their citizens" (Hobsbawm, 1990: 91). I have noted elsewhere how Nyerere, in his speeches, concentrated on the rhetorical construction of an identity-constitutive label such as *mjamaa* (a hardly translatable term, literally meaning 'family member', but to be interpreted as 'supporter of Ujamaa' (Blommaert, 1991: 117-118). In a similar vein, the efforts towards constructing a national history and forms of political organisation based on 'traditional' African characteristics (Mobutu's "Authenticité" is a fine example) can be seen as attempts towards grounding the modern nation in the past. Yet, in the same breath, this African grounding of the modern nation is coupled with an evolutionist theory. The African nations are not yet 'modern' in the eyes of their leaders, and therefore they have to embark on a process of modernisation and development. This, in turn, is supposed to explain the existence and the necessity of very un-African elements of social structure: social and status class differentiation, formal (school) education, and new forms of economic organisation.

Although Ujamaa is not a unique or totally innovative political ideology, some of its features give it a particular place in the whole of African political ideologies. One of these features is the fact that the struggle for nation-building, and thereby that for a common identity of the citizens – the so-called 'National Culture' – has relied largely on *language*. It is well known that Tanzania was one of the very rare countries not to adopt the former colonial language as its national and administrative language after independence. But this is only a symptom of a much deeper phenomenon: Ujamaa has made use of a particular essentialist vision of

⁶. Parallels with current developments in Europe are very clear. Resistance against oppression rapidly takes the form of a "we are not this" formula. As soon as the struggle is over, the question arises "but what are we"? The answer is then sought in real or imagined 'core features'.

language and sociocultural identity as one of the core elements of its nation-building assignment.

The strategy of naturalisation: the Tanzanian and his language

The history of the Swahili language is relatively well known (e.g. Nurse & Spear, 1985) and language planning efforts under colonial rule have also been adequately documented (Wright, 1965; Snoxall, 1985). We now know that first the Germans, and later the British, used an available lingua franca, Swahili, as a pragmatic medium for the benefit of efficiency in colonial rule. The advantage that Swahili offered over other languages was its spread throughout the East African territories as a trade language. They thus capitalised on what was already a sociolinguistic *fait accompli*. Although the choice and promotion of Swahili may have meant a relative preponderance of the coastal Waswahili societies over inland peoples, the language was not outspokenly ethnic. This de-ethnicised connotation of Swahili became even more important when Nyerere and his pro-independence movement made Swahili the medium of nationalist struggle against the British (see Kihore, 1976). Note, however, that these observations are based on rhetorical evidence reflecting official (i.e. those of the political majority) attitudes. As will become clear from Section 5 of this paper, the view of Swahili as a de-ethnicised language is not something that carries consensual agreement, especially not among East-African scholars.⁷

The interesting point here, from a language-ideological point of view, is that the appropriation of Swahili by Nyerere and TANU implied a symbolic shift: as a nationwide language, Swahili changed from a pragmatic medium (one used for predominantly operational, even cynical, purposes) to a highly ideologically and symbolically marked medium. The efforts made by (the Germans and) the British to spread standardised Swahili through schools, media and administrative practice, and which were guided by practical motives, were now transformed into a weapon for national anticolonial mobilisation. This was a brilliant accomplishment.⁸ Swahili became a symbol of unity for the oppressed Tanganyikans. It could be their symbol, because it was (rhetorically constructed and perceived as) African. Moreover, as mentioned above, it appeared to be not ethnically marked, at least not to an extent where it would be repulsive to the non-Waswahili. This was a beautiful asset for TANU, because it was in line with two basic principles of their struggle:

7. I am grateful to Rugatiri Mekacha for drawing my attention to the need to clearly state the difference between doctrine and minority opinions in this matter.

8. I do not wish to infer that it was a consciously planned and executed move by Nyerere and his followers. I am more inclined to suspect that it may have been pragmatically motivated at the outset, and that the ideological power of using Swahili became apparent inductively, as a judgement of effects. On the other hand, the fact that language could become the target of nationalistic symbolism is not surprising. According to Mazrui (1978: 72), rhetoric served as a surrogate for real power in pre-independence Africa. By lack of other means of accomplishment, language usage was 'politics'.

- a. It allowed for an egalitarian connotation. Because it appeared to be 'nobody's language', it could become anybody's language. It emphasised the absence of status differences based, for example, on race or ethnicity – a sensitive point to Nyerere, of which he had been aware since his stay in Britain. Nyerere must have realised the divisive power of ethnicity and other discriminating parameters, and therefore 'detrribalising' his society was one of the basic aims of his political programme. In later speeches, the classless society he advocated was always illustrated, not only by means of the term *tabaka* (social class), but also *kabila* (tribe). Thus, in an interesting semantic twist, socialist (or Ujamaa) egalitarianism not only meant the abolition of socio-economic status differences, but also that of interethnic differences.
- b. Secondly, Swahili allowed for the accomplishment of national unity. By the time Nyerere and TANU began using Swahili as a rallying device, Swahili was already no longer just a coastal language. It had been spread with varying degrees of success over vast portions of the Tanganyika territory. Thus, it enabled TANU to wage efficient propaganda and mass education campaigns. It also symbolised the newness, the contemporary anchoring of what was going on. Nyerere accepted the fact that Tanganyika, though a colonial creation, would be the unit of state organisation, pending the realisation of regional (preferably pan-African) integration. The *fait accompli* of a new state unit, a remnant of colonialism, imposed the adoption of another colonial product: the existence of 'Tanganyikans' as a united group of people, with a common (colonial) history, a common present, and a common future. The adoption of the state seemed to impose the existence of a nation characterised by, among other things, a common language.

As noted by Cranford Pratt (1976), the revolution in Zanzibar and the subsequent union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika into the United Republic of Tanzania meant an influx of more radically socialist and more radically pro-Swahili forces into the politics of TANU. A truly socialist strategy did not evolve in Tanzania prior to 1966-1967 (see Metz, 1982; Pratt, 1976). From then onwards, a more elaborated form of socialism was coupled with Nyerere's own humanist bias into a programme for a new society based upon the emergence of a new man. Central in Nyerere's design for a new society stands a new Tanzanian, who has learnt to think and feel in a socialist way. Speeches in which statements emphasising the central position of man in the process of nation-building and economic development do not feature are rare. On the contrary, *maendeleo maana yake ni maendeleo ya watu* ('the meaning of development is development of the people') is a common trope, which appears in various shapes in his oeuvre.⁹

Nyerere believed in the possibility of radical (revolutionary) change in sociocultural systems. The main vehicle for change was education, hence the enormous attention given to Swahilisation and curriculum reform in primary and secondary education, and to adult education. The policy of *Elimu ya Kujitegemea* (Education for Self-reliance), launched shortly after the Arusha Declaration, was one of the cornerstones of the transition to Ujamaa, because:

⁹ This example is taken from *Uhuru na Maendeleo*, an explanatory policy paper published in 1968.

...Tanzania places a great deal of hope in the ability of education to create conditions conducive to socialist development. For Tanzania, independence basically implies development through education. ... Tanzania has committed herself to socialist development, laying a major emphasis on the growing consciousness and skills of the masses provided through Adult Education (Hall, 1975: 60).

And of course:

The greater the amount of schooling an individual has had in Tanzania the greater would his proficiency in Swahili be likely to be (Abdulaziz, 1971: 172).

Thus, *Elimu ya Kujitegemea* was not a programme developed for practical purposes only; it was the main instrument for performing the ideological shift from the old ways to the new ones. The new education policy contained a belief that Tanzanians could be gradually transformed from 'traditional' (i.e. tribally based) African over oppressed colonial subjects to free citizens whose way of life would have absorbed elements from both previous historical phases: they would live like Africans, but in a modern and deeply changed environment. That environment would be the socialist state, Tanzania, a new structure replacing the tribe. Life in that environment, however, should be based upon similar principles to those organising life in a tribal village: solidarity and dialogue among the members of the group, group participation in decision making, common ownership of the means of production, etc. Over and over again, this culture-historical syncretism has been emphasised in Nyerere's post-Arusha speeches, although mostly under the label of 'modernisation', and with a rhetorical focus on *the African traditional dimension* of the project. This is of crucial importance, because the latter feature was undoubtedly intended as a means to naturalise the process of nation-building: *the revolutionary change was supposed to develop along natural characteristics of the Tanzanians*, viz. the traditional principles of African village organisation. I now turn to this naturalisation procedure.

The new Tanzanian, the product of the Ujamaa revolution, is constructed around a feature cluster, a rather intuitive conglomerate of qualities that are supposed to make up a human being as member of this new society. These characteristics have been spelled out in documents such as the Arusha Declaration, and were reiterated in a wide variety of post-Arusha speeches and policy papers. The feature cluster comprises, among other things, elements like:

- ☞ occupation: the ideal Tanzanian is a villager involved in agricultural production;
- ☞ belief: the Tanzanian believes in Ujamaa, very much in the way of a religious belief;¹⁰

¹⁰. Every now and then, Nyerere used religious metaphors to explain Ujamaa to his people. See, for example, *Nguzo Tano za Ujamaa*, a speech given on Saba Saba in 1970, in which an explicit comparison with Islam is made through the 'five pillars' metaphor (see Blommaert, 1991).

- ☞ character: a Tanzanian is diligent, inclined to help his fellow man, and opposed to injustice and exploitation;
- ☞ common background: all Tanzanians have joint experiences of colonial oppression and liberation; they all live in a poor country in which the traces of colonial injustice are still visible;
- ☞ language: all Tanzanians are educated in Swahili; Tanzania is a Swahili-speaking country.

Notably absent from this feature cluster are things like *race* or ethnic descent, and *religion*. On the contrary, both the multiethnic and the secular (or rather: multireligious) nature of the new society are repeatedly emphasised. Religion belongs to the domain of free individual choice of the Tanzanian. A further note to be made is that the attempt to ground Ujamaa in African traditions distances it clearly from doctrinary socialism, in the sense that subjective forces – socialism as a state of mind, a statement directly associated with African tradition – are granted a self-evidence (and a prominence) which they do not have in doctrinary socialism (see Metz, 1982). Socialism, to Nyerere, had the appearance of a 'return to the roots', as a natural state of the African man. Typical in this respect is also that the economic programme of Ujamaa takes a very 'African' shape (with its connotations of naturalness): rural, agriculture-based self-reliance.

But let us take a look at language. Swahili is seen as one of the natural features of a Tanzanian, it appears to be an indisputable, unquestionable element of Tanzanian identity. It is one expression of, as well as a medium of reproduction for, the fundamental equality of men. As noted earlier, this connotation of Swahili stands in contrast to the pragmatic nature of the spread of Swahili throughout the country. Swahili was never a characteristic of the people who became Tanzanians; it was (one of) their language(s) because of conscious language planning and linguistic engineering. Nyerere minimised the fact that Swahili was basically a historical accident, and attributed fundamental identity-constitutive values to the language. However, Swahili is not the marker of a traditional identity, but of a *new* identity: that of the National Culture of the Tanzanian. This is where the ambiguity of the cultural philosophy of Ujamaa becomes very clear. Although the target of Ujamaa is a *modern* society, all the building blocks explicitly associated with its construction are *traditional* elements that will be *modernised* in the process. It is a peculiar construct, and somewhat paradoxical. The road to modernity looks longer when one starts from 'traditional' things than when one starts from adopted, 'modern' things. This, for one thing, accounts for the frustration experienced in later years by Swahili scholars who attempted to 'modernise' Swahili. The irrational element causing the ambiguity is the concept of *naturalness*, which appears to be a major preoccupation for the architects of Ujamaa. The development process should move along natural lines, natural characteristics of humans and their societies. It should, first and foremost, be an African kind of development towards modernity. Hence the adoption of an African (= natural) language, as constitutive of the identity of the modern Tanzanian.

In his association of language and 'natural' identity, Nyerere followed a deep-rooted and widespread linguistic ideology that can also be found in European

nationalism (see Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992). This linguistic ideology, which can be traced back to Herderian philosophy, is that of the inseparable link between language, society and culture: the ideal society consists of a sovereign people, living in an independent state, and sharing a common culture, which finds its expression in a common language. Their language is the mirror of their *Volksgeist*, of the set of values, customs and knowledge they share with one another. Language is the inalienable marker of membership in the community. It is a basically romantic vision, which (especially in the case of Swahili) is hardly ever realistic. But it is, just like everything else, more an object of change than a fact of reality: the ideology of language is part of the general transformation of attitudes and ways of life that make up the Ujamaa programme. The fact that it is rhetorically presented as an accomplishment, rather than as a project, may be attributed to its instrumental role in the process of diffusion and implementation of Ujamaa. Thus, eventually, the Tanzanians would all become free Africans, *wananchi* ('countrymen') and *wajamaa* ('supporters of Ujamaa'), and in the process would have become *new Waswahili*. This romantic vision is eloquently expressed in S.S. Mushi's speech on 'The role of Swahili books in nation-building endeavours' (Mushi, 1968). Mushi, who was the governmental Promotor of Swahili Language and Literature, delivered this speech shortly after the Arusha declaration in 1967; the following extracts illustrate the ideological pattern I have just outlined:

... if we are really determined to evolve a national culture and to disseminate that culture to the nation as a whole, we ought to write books in a language which is understood by the people to whom we address the books we write. It is very difficult to promote a culture using a foreign language. ... Our reliance on school books written by foreigners has, on the whole, been responsible for inculcating unrealistic ideas about our society to most of our educated men and women. ... What we now need are Swahili books written by nationals who can best depict our cultural past and reflect our national ethic as well as the current policy of 'Socialism and Self-Reliance' (p. 5).

We notice a direct association between language, culture and ideology, together with an emphasis on the 'naturalness' of being a speaker of the language. Only a Tanzanian, writing in Swahili, can produce appropriate books for Tanzanians and thus disseminate the National Culture and its values. A European writing in Swahili is likely to produce unrealistic ideas; similarly, a Tanzanian writing in English would not make the point (so it is implicitly argued).

In sum, Ujamaa placed high hopes on Swahili, which had become the symbol of the new Tanzanian nation. Its main virtue, and the big reason why it was chosen instead of English, was the assumption that Swahili was part of the common legacy of the people. It was *African*, and therefore it corresponded to the true nature of the African peoples united in the Republic. By means of Swahili, the Tanzanians would be capable of freeing themselves from intellectual and cultural oppression.

The strategy of legitimisation: enter the scientists

Opinions such as the one quoted above were soon echoed by many scientists. 'Self-reliance' was thought to apply also to intellectual performance and production, as Nyerere had repeatedly stressed. Tanzania should produce its own, particularised form of science, adapted to the characteristics of its cultural and political system. Programmatic statements more or less in line with Ujamaa doctrine very often replaced realism, especially in the social sciences dealing with aspects of local culture and society. Scientists served a legitimising purpose: they would bring in evidence to sustain and to elaborate the cultural project of Ujamaa.

In the field of Swahili studies, scholars appear to have been very aware of their contribution to nation-building. Swahili, then, was defined in exactly the same Herderian terms as Ujamaa doctrine would want it: it was the natural container of the new National Culture. This belief can be illustrated with the following extract from a speech by the well-known Swahili scholar and writer Lodhi Abdulaziz (1974: 11, 13)

The Tanzanian Culture therefore is the sum-total of all the good customs and traditions of the different language groups in Tanzania. All these regional cultures using local languages, or dialects, are now being transformed into a National Culture using Swahili which is increasingly commanding the loyalty, affection and respect of Tanzanians.

Swahili is borrowing from other Bantu languages and vice versa which makes Swahili an instrument of cultural infusion. Tribal words and their cultural significations are blending to develop a way of life that will soon come to be known as typically Tanzanian, since any process of cultural homogenisation must lead ultimately to the acquisition of common values, modes of expression and elements of life-style.

After a few generations, the so called tribes, their cultures and languages as we know them today disappear to give way to a unified culture expressed in a rejuvenated Swahili."

This fragment contains all the ideological elements typical of Tanzanian, Ujamaa-influenced sociolinguistics. First, the symbolic value of the language as a carrier of cultural values is strongly emphasised. The 'nation' is clearly a *cultural* complex articulated in Swahili. Second, this cultural complex is changing in a politically well-determined way: together with Ujamaa, Swahili and the National Culture will develop and replace (or complement) the local languages and cultures. Third, this process of change is a natural process; it is based on local African traditions. All the ideological dogmata have been absorbed in this statement, and science has been politicised: linguistic research is part of the overall modernisation policy that will steer the country into a bright new future, centred around a new human being. Swahili is the metaphorical correlate of overall independence, freedom and development. The independent Tanzanians had been taught to "think of themselves and behave as Waswahili, an erstwhile accursed label" (Mbuguni & Ruhumbika, 1974: 275). These ideological components dominate the

overwhelming majority of published linguistic research on Swahili in the years between 1966 and 1978, and still appear sporadically in recent publications.

In the meantime, other scholars went to search for a national history in Tanzania (see Denoon & Kuper, 1970). In this search, the geographical space now taken by Tanzania was treated as a legitimate historical spatial unit, with a history different from that of neighbouring areas. Also, much emphasis was laid on the emergence of anti-colonial resistance or nationalist movements. In the eyes of Denoon and Kuper (1970: 348), "this is ideological history" because:

... the new historiography has adopted the political ideology of current African nationalism, and has used it to inform the study of African history. That commitment inclines the school towards rhetoric in defence of narrowly selected themes and interpretations, and the stereotyping and total rejection of alternative views. We suggest also that the basic assumption regarding the continuity and impact of national movements is questionable, and is asserted rather than demonstrated.

In the eyes of the Tanzanian scholars themselves, the construction of a national history was part of the process of the reappropriation, or decolonisation, of their own culture. And efforts in the same direction were not restricted to historians. Language scholars such as Chiraghdin and Mnyampala (1977) and many others resumed the quest for the original Waswahili, and traced the history and spread of the language throughout Tanzania. The amount of effort consumed in this quest is astonishing, and it focused on the refutation of two commonly used assumptions about the history of Swahili:

- a. The association of Swahili with *Arab influence*, hence with slavery and dominance, and
- b. The claim that Swahili is not really a *Bantu language*, but more of a creole formed in an ethnically mixed and socially stratified society in the past.

The conclusion reached by many authors is unequivocal: Swahili genetically is a 'pure' Bantu language, and it bears no colonialist or imperialist stigmata whatsoever. Linguistic-genetic arguments brought forward by other (non-African) scholars, such as Hinnebusch or Heine, arguments by Polomé, for example, about Swahili being a creole or a dialanguage, or warnings by Harries and Whiteley about the utopian character of the language planning project, were often marginalised or qualified as not *ad rem*. The reason for this again was a political one: Swahili *cannot* have been anything else but an African language spoken by free men, because that is what it symbolises in present-day Tanzania.

Similarly, literary scholars re-emphasised the existence and the aesthetic merits of historical Swahili literature. Classical verse forms were being revitalised by government-supporting poets such as Mnyampala (see Harries, 1972) and even expanded with a new (but classical-looking) form of poetical expression, the *Ngonjera*. The *Ngonjera* was an explicitly political genre, which had to fulfil three functions (formulated by Prime Minister Rashidi Kawawa and summarised in Harries, 1972: 52-3):

First, to give the people a new fluency in Swahili so that they would be able to explain in public and with ease the politics of the nation. Second, by learning the words by heart the people would be familiarizing themselves with national aims as envisaged in the Arusha Declaration, the Ujamaa villages project, the concept of Self-reliance, etc., and they would come to know just who their national leaders in the various segments of the political organization were. Third, the people would achieve a consciousness of their national culture and would learn to reject foreign culture.

Again, the ideological perspective outlined above is clearly illustrated in this delineation of functions for Ngonjera verse. Ngonjera, however, also had a deeper, more implicit functional dimension, one that created a paradox with the political dogma that called for its invention. As a verse form similar to other traditional Swahili forms of poetry, it imposed *traditional coastal culture* on the Tanzanian National Culture. It represented a particular view on the cultural identity of the new Waswahili: they had to mirror the original Swahili culture, in its coastal and slightly arabised characteristics. This was a quite meaningful development, because it indicated the basic weakness of the suggestion of Swahili as a natural marker of identity in the new society. From an essentialist perspective, Mnyampala and his supporters made a legitimate point: Swahili was not an empty shell. In the Herderian view so eagerly adopted in the promotion of Swahili as a national language, Swahili stood for the coastal culture. The spread of the language, quite naturally, had to entail the spread of coastal Swahili culture.

This idea met with severe opposition from literature scholars concentrated at the University of Dar es Salaam. These scholars spotted the political incorrectness in the 'traditionalist' approach to poetry: Ngonjera referred to an old, pre-Ujamaa society, whereas politically correct Swahili poetry had to reflect the new social and cultural transformation, best expressed in free verse. Swahili, for them, was no longer associated with coastal culture; it had begun a second life when TANU adopted it as the language of anticolonial struggle (see, for example, the introduction to Mulokozi & Kahigi, 1979). This controversy became known as the literary debate of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was an extremely interesting event from a language-ideological point of view, and still lingers on (see Bertoni, 1989). The debate was again fuelled by TS Sengo, who, in a polemical article, advocated a more 'honest' (i.e. a coastal and Islamised) perspective on Swahili in Swahili scholarship (Sengo, 1987). His argument was countered by Madumulla, who reiterated the socialist and Tanzanian perspective on Swahili (Madumulla, 1989). It again was a clash between those who wanted to emphasise historical cultural continuity in Swahili, and those who wanted to emphasise the revolutionary break between the past and the present in Tanzania. At the same time, it was an accurate demonstration of the diversification of the concept of Mswahili, which resulted from the consistent search for evidence in support of the role assigned to Swahili in Ujamaa theory. Sengo advocated the 'objective' approach to identity, which associates the 'real' language with its historical speaker community, while Madumulla emphasised the 'subjective' or political side. None of the parties involved, however, challenged the Herderian, romantic view

of Swahili as a container of culture. Rather, the debate was about *which* set of values should be contained in and transmitted through Swahili. Both positions, therefore, led to insurmountable philosophical and/or political contradictions.

The main problem encountered by scientists involved in Ujamaa-inspired research was that of *history and tradition*. In their search for a scientific legitimization of Tanzanian National Culture (the Tanzanian *nation*), scientists tried to incorporate politically acceptable views on the history of Swahili, the clearest mark of this National Culture, into their work. But in the theoretical direction imposed by the 'naturalness'-connotation of Ujamaa, culture is readily associated with continuity: people are what they have always been. This, then, resulted in ambiguous conclusions, because Ujamaa was only partially based on cultural continuity ('African' socialism), while it stressed the revolutionary (i.e. discontinuous) character of Tanzanian history. The resulting Gordian knot is that the *new* culture contained in the Ujamaa programme fundamentally is a contradiction in terms. Thinking about culture as tradition has little to offer when this thinking has to be applied to a synchronic process of sociocultural transformation.

In a similar vein, the *nation*, which in Ujamaa theory carries the National Culture transmitted through Swahili, is in fact the *state*. Thus state ideology and National Culture become synonymous – an unjustified synonymy which has allowed the confusion between 'objective' Swahili culture (the historical culture of the coastal societies) and 'subjective', political Swahili culture (that of contemporary Tanzania) to create intellectual and political paradoxes. For instance, it is not uncommon to read an essentialist statement about the close association between language and culture, illustrated by means of references to (coastal) Swahili greetings and accompanied by a sneer about "how Swahili culture is murdered in what is supposed to be Swahili literature" (Mhina, 1972: 45) and another, political, statement a few pages further, about how usefully and easily Swahili could be introduced in other African countries to solve their nation-building problems. Two levels of factuality and argumentation are being blended here. On the one hand, there appears to be a need to justify the adoption of Swahili as a national language in terms of its historical-cultural embeddedness in coastal Swahili societies;¹¹ on the other hand, exactly the opposite has to be argued (the de-ethnicised and egalitarian qualifications of Swahili) in order to sustain the political (socialist) usefulness of Swahili. Both levels of argumentation use the same central term, culture, but in an incompatible way: one refers to a diachronic entity (the traditional society), the other one to a synchronic entity (the state). Again, the scholar encounters the paradox between historical culture and the contemporary process it is supposed to justify.

¹¹. One could speculate about the reasons for this justification. Without speculating too much, however, one may notice how consistently Swahili is being compared to English. Progress in the implementation of Swahili promotion programmes is always measured with reference to English (see Blommaert, in press). The consistent search for equivalence with English may be one reason why the cultural tradition surrounding Swahili is repeatedly emphasised.

I believe much of the scholarly work on Swahili, National Culture and education in Tanzania must be interpreted in the light of this paradox. A Herderian view on language in relation to culture, so it appears, is particularly ill-suited for a political programme such as Ujamaa. As soon as the historical connection between the language and a cultural tradition is established, the basic rationale for the adoption of Swahili collapses: the assumption that it was nobody's language, which was needed to make it everybody's language. In the postcolonial history of Swahili, scientists, in their attempt to legitimise the naturalness of Swahili as a central component of Tanzanian cultural identity, have in fact falsified the very argument they were trying to build.

Conclusion: the new Waswahili

The pervasiveness of Ujamaa ideology cannot be overstated. As it attempted to formulate a radically different perspective on man and his society, it contained a view on language and culture derived from romantic culture philosophy. In my opinion, the attempt has failed because of the inadequacies of this philosophical position. As noted by Finkelkraut (1987), the Herderian position of cultural 'uniqueness', and its linguistic-ideological correlate of the unity between language, culture and identity, can easily become a trap in which simplism and homogeneity replace realism and productive thinking. The simplism in Ujamaa theory is particularly apparent in its view on cultural dynamics – a mechanistic process that evolves through apparently eternal and natural laws of change. Its homogeneity is apparent in its attempt to do away with internal sociocultural differentiation, to replace or complement it by a highly politicised National Culture. Such an either/or project is doomed to fail, especially when the search for historical arguments sustaining the legitimacy of the new National Culture and its vehicle, Swahili, appears to result in contradictory and ideologically plied evidence.

In common Dar es Salaam parlance, a *mswahili* is somebody who behaves in a boorish fashion, who has had little education and who lives under poor conditions. Although many of the young city dwellers now speak Swahili as a first language, and therefore are genuine Waswahili sociolinguistically, they would never identify themselves as such. This may be the final piece of evidence to counter the cultural philosophy of Ujamaa: in a sociolinguistic sense it has resulted in the creation of new Waswahili; in an anthropological sense it has failed to do so. The new Waswahili are not the old Waswahili, because language and culture do not seem to go as closely together as suggested in Ujamaa theory and subsequent Tanzanian scientific research. There is a repertoire of different versions and definitions of the Waswahili, their culture and their language. Each of these versions and definitions can be sustained by referring to real or constructed historical facts. Together, however, they form a complex of rhetorical and argumentative schemes that are used *politically*.

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The effect of language policy on language attitudes: A case study of young Khoesan language speakers in Botswana

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Moreover, it is through its own language that a cultural community has access to its own history, and perhaps, equally important, to its own science and technology (Dirven in Language, cultural community and nation in Africa, 1991).

Introduction

Botswana, occupying an area of over half a million square kilometres, is one of the relatively large countries in Southern Africa. In spite of its large size, it is sparsely inhabited, as it has a population of only 1.7 million people (according to the 2001 national census report) (Government of Botswana, 2001). However, it is both multi-ethnic and multilingual, as at least 28 languages are spoken within its borders (Batibo *et al.*, 2003; Smieja, 2003). The languages are divided into three groupings according to their historical origins: those of the Bantu family, comprising Setswana, Ikalanga, Shekgalagadi, Chikuhane (Sesubiya), Thimbukushu, Rugciriku (Rumanyo), Shiyeyi, Sebirwa, Setswapong, Sindebele, Nambya, Otjiherero, Silozi and Zezuru, are spoken by over 96.8% of the population of Botswana, while those of the Khoesan (Basarwa¹) group are spoken by only about 2.9% of the population, but comprise many linguistic entities, including Naro, !Xóǀ, #Hua, Jul'hoan, #Kx'au||'ein, Nama, Kua, Shua, Tshwa, Khwedam, !Gwi, and ||Gana, many of which exist in clusters. The third group, the Indo-European family, is represented by Afrikaans, which has been adopted by some Batswana² as their mother tongue in some parts of the country, particularly in the western districts of Ghanzi and Kgalagadi. English is also widely spoken, mainly as a second language.

¹ According to the survey, the speakers call themselves Basarwa rather than Khoesan or by any specific ethnonym. We shall therefore also use the term Sarwa, without intending any sort of pejorative meaning the term might have.

² Here, reference is made to all ethnic groups in Botswana as a nation, not specifically and only to the Tswana group.

The language situation in Botswana

Although no recent census has addressed the question of the number of speakers of the various languages spoken in the country, some estimates have been made by scholars such as Andersson and Janson (1997), Batibo *et al.* (1997, 2003) and Hasselbring (2000, 2001) and by the *Ethnologue* (2005). The most recent estimates, based on the above sources and recent census reports, are provided by Batibo *et al.* (2003).³ These figures are reproduced below:

Table 1: Estimated number of speakers of the different Botswana languages (after Batibo *et al.*, 2003)

	Language	Estimated speakers	Percentage
1	Setswana	1,335,000	78.6%
2	Ikalanga	150,000	8.83%
3	Shekgalagadi	48,000	2.82%
4	Thimbukushu	30,000	1.76%
5	Shiyeyi	18,000	1.06%
6	Nambya (Najwa)	15,000	0.88%
7	Sebirwa	12,500	0.73%
8	Zezuru (Shona)	12,000	0.70%
9	Otjiherero	11,500	0.67%
10	Naro	10,000	0.59%
11	Sindebele	9,000	0.53%
12	Afrikaans	7,500	0.44%
13	Chikuhane (Sesubiya)	7,000	0.41%
14	Setswana	6,000	0.35%
15	Shua	6,000	0.35%
16	!Xóó	5,000	0.29%
17	Tshwa	5,000	0.29%
18	Khwedam	4,500	0.27%
19	Ju 'hoan	4,500	0.27%
20	Silozi (Serotsi)	3,000	0.02%
21	Sekgoa (English)	3,000	0.02%
22	Kua	2,500	0.15%
23	#Kx'au 'ein	2,500	0.15%
24	Rugciriku (Rumanyo)	2,300	0.14%
25	Gana	1,300	0.08%

³ One of the questions in the 2001 national census asked households to provide information about the languages spoken in the home. The answers to the question did not necessarily indicate the mother tongues of the residents. Most Khoesan speakers, moreover, did not list their specific languages (Batibo *et al.*, 2003).

	Language	Estimated speakers	Percentage
26	Nama (Khoekhoegowab)	1,000	0.06%
27	Gwi	1,000	0.06%
28	‡Hua	200	0.01%
	TOTAL	1,703,300	99.53%*

* The remainder (0.47%) mainly comprises recent migrant groups who speak a range of languages such as IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Kiswahili, Hindi, Urdu and Arabic.

The figures in Table 1 above should be considered as broad estimates because of the difficulty of determining who is a speaker of a given language. Firstly, language knowledge does not always correspond to ethnicity. For example, it appears that many ethnic Ovaherero do not speak Otjiherero, yet claim to do so for sentimental reasons. Ethnic Wayeyi people are in the majority in the Ngamiland area (Nyati-Ramahobo, personal communication), yet the language is spoken fluently by several thousands only (Vossen, 1988). Secondly, many people may speak a language as a first language, but refuse to acknowledge the language if they do not ethnically belong to that language group. This is particularly true of those who have shifted to the major languages. Thirdly, some people may be hesitant to claim to speak a language if they do not use the language often or if they are in an environment where another language is dominant. This is particularly true of people who live in urban centres, which, in most cases, are multi-ethnic and therefore use a major language as *lingua franca*.

As in most other countries of Africa, the pattern of language use in Botswana is trifocal in that three different language types are used at different levels. In this almost triglossic structure, English, the ex-colonial language, is used in all official and technical domains, such as government business, central administration, higher education, the judiciary, science and technology, international relations and most of the mass media. It is the language with the highest prestige and status in the country. Setswana, as the national language and *lingua franca*, occupies the second position and is mainly used for inter-ethnic communication and interaction in the country. It is also used for lower education, customary law, political rallies, mass media and most semi-official communication. At the bottom we find the third type, which comprises the minority languages of the country. These languages are used within the confines of their localities, mainly for intra-ethnic communication, family interaction and cultural expression.

It must be noted that there is a growing tendency in many families and settlements for young people from the minority groups to speak Setswana, either by preference or because of limited proficiency in their mother tongues. Overlapping also occurs, in that more than one language would often be used in the same domain. This has given rise, not only to language conflict, but to the emergence of various practices such as code-switching, code-mixing and massive borrowing, particularly between English and Setswana on the one hand, and Setswana and the minority languages on the other (Smieja, 2003).

The current language policy of the country

According to the language policy of the country, English, the ex-colonial language, is the official language and Setswana, the majority language and widely spoken *lingua franca*, is the national language. English, which has become highly prestigious, is used in most official, formal and technical domains. It is the language associated with education, modernity and Western living. While Setswana, the national language, is used for most semi-official public functions as well as for inter-ethnic communication, the other languages have not been accorded any public function in the country's language policy. They are mainly used in intra-ethnic interaction and cultural expression among the speakers. Many of them are neither written nor have they been adequately documented.

Although Botswana is cited as one of the countries in Africa with an explicit language policy (Batibo, 2005), the practised language policy is not enshrined anywhere in the constitution (Salona, 2005). It is a policy that has emerged as a natural development of several circumstances. First, English, which served as the official colonial language during the 81 years of British rule in the former Bechuanaland Protectorate (ruled by Britain from 1885 to 1966), emerged as the *de facto* official language at the time of independence in 1966. The other factors that favoured its continuation as official language included its already developed capacity to deal with technical and specialised discourse, its association with the ruling elite, including the many expatriates, and its association with internationality and education (Basimolodi, 2000). In the same vein, Setswana became the national language by virtue of its role as a *lingua franca* and presumably because of being spoken by the majority of speakers (78.6% of the population). The only documents in which there is any reference to this inexplicit language policy are the *Revised Policy on Education* (Government of Botswana, 1994) and *Botswana Up To Date* (Government of Botswana, 1985), both published by the Botswana Government. No mention is made of the other languages spoken in the country and this implicit language policy has, to a large degree, determined the patterns of language use and attitudes to language in the country.

The impact of the current language policy on minority language speakers

The current language policy has had an enormous impact on the speakers of the minority languages in the country, in that the promotion of English and Setswana, without proportionate promotion of the minority languages, has given rise to a disproportionate language relationship. Most minority language speakers do not see any economic or social value in their languages, as they are not associated with education, skills, job opportunities, social advancement or the wider world. They have therefore developed a negative attitude towards them.

As a result of this negative attitude, many parents are no longer transmitting their languages to the younger generation: they, instead, encourage them to master Setswana and English. This is resulting in a progressive language shift to Setswana and the death of the minority languages.

The predominance given to Setswana due to the exclusive language policy, moreover, has allowed it to exert enormous power over the other languages and cultures, as reported by Nyati-Ramahobo (2004). A number of ethnic groups in Ngamiland, which previously were matrilineal, have, for example, become patrilineal due to the impact of Setswana, a variety of Setswana. The impact of Setswana on the other languages in Botswana is also noted in the influx of cultural vocabulary into some of the small languages, like Sebirwa and Setswapong (Sethibe, 1998; Thaelo, 1997).

Language attitudes among the younger generation

More than one generation has risen since independence in 1966. In fact, those who were in their 30s during independence have now become old people. Most of the people in the country were born after independence, and the majority of them have therefore experienced the present language policy throughout their lives. This has presumably shaped their language attitudes. The question therefore is whether future generations will have the same language attitude towards the three types of language spoken in the country. It was the need to investigate what future language attitudes might be that led the present authors to embark on field research to determine prevailing attitudes to language among the youth.⁴

The survey was conducted in the Central, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi and Ngamiland districts. These districts were targeted because this is where most minority language speakers are found. In each of these districts, one primary school and one secondary school were selected for the study. In Ngamiland, however, where there is a concentration of ethnic groups, two primary schools and two secondary schools were chosen for the survey. The relevant schools were selected on the basis of the large number of minority language-speaking students registered in those schools, particularly those of Khoesan origin.⁵ The objective of the study was to determine the attitudes of the students towards their own languages as well as towards English and Setswana. The expectation was that students from primary and secondary schools would be adequately representative of the future generation of young people.

Language transmission

According to the findings, only 6.5% of the respondents from a Sarwa (Khoesan) background stated that their parents spoke a Sarwa language at home. This would mean that most Sarwa respondents spoke either Setswana, the national *lingua franca*, or the dominant language of the area. In the case of mixed marriages, the tendency was to use the non-Sarwa language. Such a tendency would be explained by a linguistic hierarchy in which non-Sarwa languages would

⁴ The authors would like to thank the *UB TROMSØ San/Basarwa Programme for Research and Capacity Building* for providing the research funds that enabled them to conduct the fieldwork for this study.

⁵ Although the school sample was small, it was hoped that the study would present a general picture of what the young minority language speakers thought of their languages.

be accorded a higher level of social prestige than the Sarwa languages. It is not surprising, therefore, that children belonging, and admitting that they belonged, to a Sarwa community often did not learn their language at home. In fact, such communities did not form the only minority groups in which the children's first language was not the parents' ethnic language, as shown in Table 2 below.⁶

Table 2: Percentages for first language acquisition: comparison between ethnic languages and Setswana

Ethnic group*	First language learnt – ethnic group language	Tswana
Yeyi	26.3%	60.5%
Herero	94.6%	5.4%
Mbukushu	82.9%	9.8%
Sarwa	45.8%	47.9%
Kgalagadi	64.5%	28.0%
Kalanga	58.5%	34.1%

Note: Tswana students were left out, as well as the only Chikuhane (Subiya) respondent.

The above table shows that mother tongue transmission among the Sarwa groups is very low (only 45.8%). However, we see that the figures are even lower (26.3%) for some Bantu languages, such as Shiyeyi, where language transmission through the mother tongue has always been reported to be low (Vossen, 1988; Sommer & Vossen, 2000). What is also striking is the fact that very few Sarwa children have learnt a Sarwa language as a second language at home. This is presumably because parents are not keen to teach their children a language that is rated lower once a language that is rated more highly in the linguistic social hierarchy has been acquired. However, only 34.7% of the children have been limited to learning only one language at home. The rest were exposed to at least two languages.

Preference in language mastery

The survey indicated clearly that the respondents' preferences for the languages they would like to speak fluently depended on the socio-economic benefits associated with the languages to which they were exposed. Thus, English and Setswana were accorded the highest preference. Other languages, such as Otjiherero, Ikalanga, Shekgalagadi and the Sarwa varieties, were also accorded high scores. This was presumably because they represented symbolic values as sources of identity and self-determination to those to whom they belonged ethnically or have proven useful in their actual living circumstances. Table 3 shows the preferred languages in which the respondents desired to be fluent.

⁶ In this table and in all others to follow, the prefixes of language names will be left out, thus *Setswana* will be given as *Tswana*.

Table 3: The preferred languages in which the respondents would like to be fluent

Language	Number	%
English	276	43.8
Tswana	171	27.1
Kalanga	33	5.2
Kgalagadi	30	4.8
Herero	29	4.6
Sarwa	28	4.4
Afrikaans	19	3.0
Yeyi	11	1.7
French	9	1.4
Mbukushu	5	0.8
Subiya	4	0.6
Xhosa	4	0.6
Ndebele	3	0.5
Tswapong	2	0.3
Birwa	1	0.2
Sotho	1	0.2
Zulu	1	0.2
Tsotsitala	1	0.2
Swahili	1	0.2
Spanish	1	0.2
TOTAL	630	100.0%

The low esteem of the mother tongue was further manifested in the respondents' preferences for English and Setswana as the languages they deemed most important to master. The high rate of preference for Setswana and English is a clear manifestation of the impact that the present language policy has made on the attitudes of the people, including the minority language speakers. These stereotyped language attitudes are being carried forward to the younger generation. In fact, such attitudes are reinforced by the increasing attainment of education by younger people and by the impact of globalisation.

Preferred use of language at home and at school

Most of the respondents wanted to see both English and Setswana used at home. While 462 (73.3%) of about 630 respondents wanted English to be used, 334 (53.0%) wanted Setswana. This is a clear indication of how, even in their home environments, the educated youth want to detach themselves from ethnic links by preferring to be associated with languages used for wider communication. This is also evidenced by the fact that very few favoured the option of combining English or Setswana with the ethnic languages. Only 109 (17.3%) wanted to see Setswana

used in combination with other languages and only 23 (3.7%) wanted English in combination with other languages.

On the other hand, most respondents preferred continuing with English and Setswana as media of instruction at school. Very few respondents (7.0%) favoured the use of a mother tongue. This, again, is a reflection of the language policy which, since independence in 1966, has limited the media of instruction to Setswana at lower primary school level and English in the subsequent years. Both parents and children have come to associate education with these two languages. The low response rate regarding the use of ethnic languages in education is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: The languages that respondents preferred as media of instruction for their children at school

Language	Number	%
Tswana	215	36.1
English	337	56.6
Tswana and English	2	0.3
Yeyi	1	0.2
Herero	2	0.3
Kalanga	4	0.7
Sarwa	5	0.8
Kgalagadi	10	1.7
Tsotsitala	1	0.2
Spanish	1	0.2
French	14	2.4
Afrikaans	3	0.5
TOTAL	595	100.0

In spite of the high rate of preference for Setswana and English as media of instruction at school, 56.8% of respondents admitted that children would learn faster and better in their mother tongue yet wanted their children to learn in Setswana and English. In fact, Setswana was often given preference at pre-school level, while English was chosen for all the levels, particularly from the upper primary onwards. However, this choice very clearly shows how ambiguous and even contradictory the feelings of the minority language speakers are and that they reveal two dimensions: the individual one that involves factors like identity and ethnic membership, and a second dimension that shows awareness of a wider context, of practical socio-economic reasoning.

Ethnic/cultural preservation

The attitude towards language use at home was also manifested in attitudes towards the preservation of ethnic cultures, i.e. respecting other ethnic cultures, where the Tswana rating in favour of such preservation was 76%, with the Sarwa

respondents' score among the lowest at 47.1%. This is another manifestation of the over-projection of the Setswana language and culture, which has tended to create an attitude of indifference towards their own languages and cultures among the minority groups. This is even worse in the case of the Sarwa languages, which have a long legacy of domination and marginalisation. In fact, the ethnic groups with strong cultural attachment, like the Ovaherero, Wayeyi and Bakalanga, revealed more positive attitudes towards their languages and culture, as Table 5 shows.

Table 5: Respondents' attitudes towards their ethnic origin

Ethnic group I belong to	I'm proud to be identified by my ethnic origin			
	<i>Yes, sure</i>	<i>No, not really</i>	<i>I'm not sure</i>	<i>I don't care</i>
Tswana	(19) 76.0%	(2) 8.0%	(2) 8.0%	(2) 8.0%
Yeyi	(26) 65.0%	(4) 10.0%	(2) 5.0%	(8) 20.0%
Herero	(30) 60.0%	(8) 16.0%	(2) 4.0%	(10) 20.0%
Mbukushu	(23) 54.8%	(3) 7.1%	(4) 9.5%	(12) 28.6%
Sarwa	(28) 47.1%	(8) 16.3%	(4) 9.5%	(9) 18.4%
Kgalagadi	(44) 44.9%	(25) 25.5%	(13) 13.3%	(16) 16.3%
Kalanga	(24) 58.5%	(3) 7.3%	(2) 4.9%	(12) 29.3%
Subiya	(1) 100.0%	---	---	---

Compared to the other minority groups in Botswana, the Sarwa respondents were among the least assertive in identifying themselves by their ethnic origins. In fact, only 47.1% said that they were proud to be identified by their ethnic origin. This figure was the second lowest after the Shekgalagadi, whose score was only 44.9%.⁷ However, despite the low figures displayed by the Sarwa respondents, ethnicity has usually been the last feature of identity to be lost among the Sarwa communities, as demonstrated in studies by Batibo (1998, 2001) and Chebanne and Nthapelelang (2000). The significant number of respondents who stated that they “don't care about ethnic pride” (see Diagram 1 below) could reflect the national policy of equality among ethnic groups or merely be a trend among the youth, who may wish to detach themselves from ethnic linkages as they feel that they belong to the wider world.

⁷ It is rather surprising that Shekgalagadi has such a low score, given that it is a dominant language in Central Kalahari and attract many second language learners, particularly among the Sarwa.

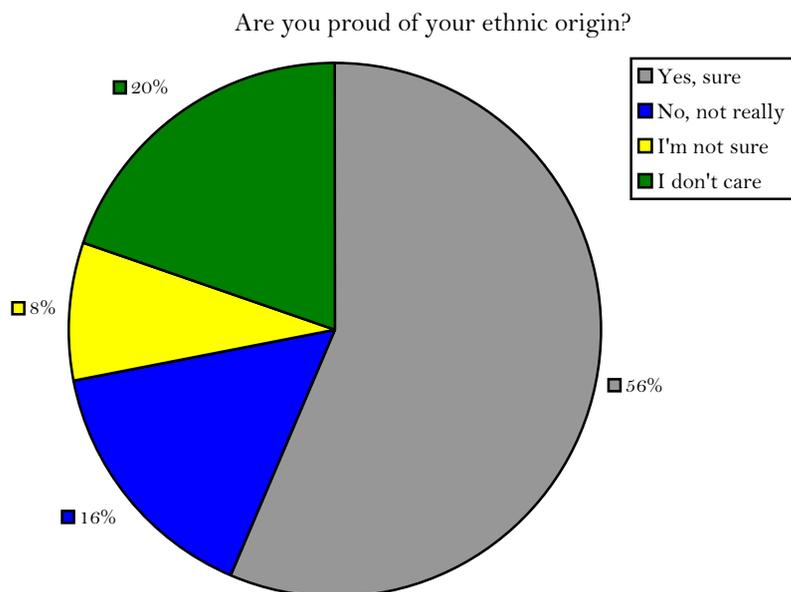


Diagram 1: Pride in ethnic origin in general.

Conclusion

From the above study, it is clear that those who form part of the minority language groups in Botswana have developed a generally negative attitude towards their languages and cultures. This seems to have resulted from the present language policy in the country, which gives no recognition to minority languages by according them a public role that could have preserved their utilitarian value and social prestige. The situation is even worse in the case of the Sarwa (Khoesan) languages, which have always suffered social stigma due to the historical legacy of subjugation and marginalisation. The generally low numbers of those who speak these languages tend to make them highly vulnerable. This has resulted in a great desire, particularly among the educated youth, to prefer the languages of wider communication and better socio-economic opportunities, like Setswana and English.

It is clear that the present language policy does not tally well with the model of democracy and transparency to which Botswana has committed itself, and for which it is highly regarded among the countries of Africa. In recent years there has been a growing outcry both from within and outside the country to redress some of the social and political imbalances, many of which were inherited from the colonial period. One of this is the current language policy (Chebanne, 2004; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2004). An ideal solution would be to optimise the use of each language in the country so that each language is utilised at different levels, according to its size, degree of vitality, level of development and the attitudes of its speakers. The Zimbabwean case offers the most highly structured and optimally planned model

of such a hierarchy, with six proposed levels, as shown in Table 6 below (Hachipola, 1996: 4).

Table 6: The hierarchy of language use in Zimbabwe (after Hachipola, 1996)

	State/Role	Languages
1	Official language	English
2	National language	Shona
3	Provincial language	Ndebele
4	Language of education and mass media only	Ikalanga, Shangani, Tonga, Venda
5	Languages of mass media only	Chewa
6	No role	Barwa, Hwesa, Kunda, Nambya, Sena, Sotho, Tshwaa, Xhosa

A similar hierarchy could be established in the case of Botswana, with widely used languages like Ikalanga and Shekgalagadi being designated as provincial or area languages for use in domains such as local administration, lower/pre-education, customary law, local mass media and literacy. Some of the developed languages, such as Naro, Otjiherero, Nama, Afrikaans, Sindebele and Shiyeyi, could be used in some public functions, where possible, such as pre-education, customary law, local mass media and literacy campaigns. New language use patterns should be explicitly stated in the country's constitution.

Such an equitable language policy would not only strengthen democracy and unity in the country, but also create positive attitudes among the speakers of the minority languages so as to meaningfully participate in the country's development efforts and to sustain the preservation of their languages.

Thus, although language attitudes determine the direction of language policies, it is language policies that shape language attitudes. In the case of Setswana, current language policy, based on the recognition and promotion of only two languages in the country, has had an enormous impact on the language attitudes of the people. These attitudes have prevailed among the younger generation and are responsible for the non-transmission of the minority languages to the younger generation. Thus, unless there is a review or reversal of these policies, Botswana will see the disappearance of most of its minority languages in the foreseeable future.

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Mismatch or misfit? Critical perspectives on language policy development in South Africa

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The rapid social changes in the present world, especially modern forms of globalisation and, closely connected to it, large-scale migrations, induce even more linguistic and cultural diversification at all levels of society (Dirven and Polzenhagen in Rationalist or romantic model in language policy and globalisation, 2004).

Introduction

The institutionalisation of official multilingualism in South Africa appears to be becoming an ever worsening problem. It would appear that the state is proceeding with non-official monolingualism (in English), despite the fact that the Language Clause (Section 3) of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) declares eleven languages to be official languages and determines specific language policy norms according to which these languages should be used as official languages, limited by a few factors so as to create a manageable and affordable multilingual dispensation (cf. Du Plessis & Pretorius, 1999). It thus would appear that there is a discrepancy between what is assumed on the basis of the policy and what is actually realised in practice, as if language practice is not matched with language policy (cf. Kamwangamalu, 2001, 2004; Verhoef, 1998).

An increasing number of studies are paying attention to this problem. The particular discrepancy is broadly approached from at least two sides. One school of thought approaches the dilemma as a language-political problem (in the broad sense of the concept) – in other words, that the policy that exists is not implemented for specific economic, political or ideological reasons (political unwillingness, hegemonic agendas, and so forth) (cf. Bostock, 1999; Heugh, 2002; Louw, 2004; Murray, 2002; Ridge, 2000a, 2000b; Satyo, 1999). A second school of thought ascribes the dilemma to a language management problem – in other words that there is no “true” or “sufficient” language policy and that, consequently, there is no (proper) managed implementation because expertise in this regard is lacking (cf. Reagan, 2002; Verhoef, 1998; Webb, 2002).

The former approach has received increasing attention in the recent literature on language policy. Language policy should rather be studied within the complex context of language use, according to Ricento (2000a). This could include the study of a variety of aspects, including the sociolinguistic situation, attitudes

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towards language policy, the nature of the political organisation and environment, and motivations for language policy (cf. Ager, 2001; Grin, 2003; Grin & Vaillancourt, 1999; Spolsky, 2004;).

Ricento (2000b) describes the second approach as belonging to a “technicistic” approach to the problem of language policy implementation, an approach that arises in an idealised view of the role of language planning and language management. In fact, there currently is greater insight into the limitations of this type of approach than during the 1960s and 1970s, when the field of language planning was developed (cf. Blommaert, 1996). Recent theoretical approaches are more critical and concentrate increasingly on a view of language policy as both an institutional outcome and a procedural phenomenon (cf. Kymlicka & Patten, 2003). Spolsky (2004), for example, is convinced that a language management approach guarantees neither the implementation nor the success of language policy.

Although it would obviously be possible to simply ascribe the problems relating to language policy implementation primarily to inadequate management, this would offer a one-sided perspective on a complex matter. To ascribe it largely, on the other hand, to ideology, no matter how important, would also skew one’s perspective, say Spolsky and Shohamy (1999). It is therefore essential to describe carefully the interwoven relationship between language policy, language ideology and language practice, as argued convincingly by Spolsky and Shohamy (1999) and Spolsky (2004).

A reversed view of the particular problem regarding language policy implementation in South Africa is that the language policy could possibly be mismatched with language practice. Instead of wanting to identify deficiencies in policy implementation, one would be able to go back to language policy design and question the extent to which South Africa’s language policy was designed to keep pace with the South African language reality. The work by Schiffman (1998) on the congruence between language policy and language practice brings us close to such a completely different approach. The description of language policy development in South Africa will therefore be done on the basis of this theory.

Language policy congruency

What fascinates Schiffman (1998) is that the declared (or overt) language policy of multilingual countries generally appears to be mismatched with the (covert) language policy on the practical level, or at the so-called grassroots level, “the ‘fit’ between language policies and the polities for which they have been devised are rarely appropriate” (Schiffman, 1998: 2). His point is illustrated by language policy in the USA. There is no overt language policy (at federal level) that declares English to be the *de jure* official language of the USA, yet no-one would deny that English is the *de facto* official language of the USA. English is the primary language in schools, universities, the state, the media, the business world, and so on. In the USA, there thus is a covert language policy in terms of which English is the *de facto* official language of the federation (Schiffman, 1998: 14–15).

This is a practice that came into being through specific conventions and that was maintained by the citizens without there ever having been a concomitant federal declaration on the issue.

Further examples illustrate the more general situation, where there is in fact declared policy, but where the practice is not matched with this. The declared official language, as well as language of tuition, in Cameroon, for example, is French, yet in practice the indigenous language is used as language of tuition (Schiffman, 1998: 20); in India, Hindi is the declared official language in all fields of use at federal level, with English only being official in the legal domain, yet in practice English dominates in all domains (Schiffman, 1998: 51), and so on. Scholars of the language situation in Belgium know that the same language phenomenon is present in Brussels, a federated state that is officially bilingual (French and Dutch), but which is monolingually French in practice (cf. Buyle, 2000).

Schiffman (1998: 5) believes that one should start looking for explanations for this so-called discrepancy in what he calls the linguistic cultural factor:

(L)inguistic culture is the set of behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular language.

Linguistic culture refers to what a speech community generally believes about language and about their language in particular (myths), and forms part of the social conditioning surrounding the maintenance and transfer of that community's language. Schiffman contends that language policy is eventually embedded in linguistic culture. He argues that every language policy is culture specific, and that as soon as the linguistic culture of a community or society or political dispensation is understood, it would also be possible to understand what happens to language policy, including why a specific language policy arises, why some language policies work and why others do not, and so on (Schiffman, 1998: 279). Thus, the multilingual culture of India compelled the decision makers to not (even) declare English as being official, but rather to build policy around the so-called Trilingual Formula, which grants overt acknowledgement to the Indian languages at federal, regional and local level. Nevertheless, English dominates to such an extent that it is the covert official language in practice, a situation that could be ascribed to the sociolinguistic reality of India. Although it might appear that the overt Indian language policy has failed, as a result of the dominance of English, it in actual fact has succeeded because it succeeds as a political compromise, brings linguistic diversity under control, acknowledges the value of local languages as also being languages of broader communication and permits a breadth of interpretations of the policy (Schiffman, 1998: 172).

The Indian example puts the relationship between linguistic register (functional differentiation of different linguistic codes), linguistic repertoire (abilities of language users) and the functional load of a specific register in the linguistic culture under the spotlight. It should be borne in mind that the linguistic

repertoire of speakers differs, specifically within a diglossic situation, and that the registers of all languages are not developed to the same level. In addition, the functional load of certain registers (for example English for the legal register in India) already determines how speakers will develop their repertoires. It is these complex relationships in particular that could lead to a discrepancy between language policy and sociolinguistic reality. The language policy determines, for example, which language should be used in the different registers (specialised register, high register and low register), but is not necessarily in step with the linguistic repertoires of the citizens and also does not necessarily account for the extent of functional loading of the higher registers (school, public sector, parliament, and so on).

Tension surrounding the language policy of Botswana, for example, is related directly to this complexity. At independence, Setswana was declared the national language as a result of its symbolic importance and because its higher registers were not sufficiently developed to be used as official language alongside English (as a result of the functional loading of English in these registers). In the meantime, English has started to supplant the use of Setswana in the symbolic register – Setswana is being used ever less as national language. This is happening primarily as a result of the sociolinguistic practice that has developed in the meantime, in terms of which the need to know Setswana is decreasing drastically and negative attitudes towards the language are starting to develop. Because the linguistic culture of Botswana nevertheless places a specific premium on the symbolic role of Setswana, steps are being taken to attempt to turn the situation around, including a concession made in 1985 that Setswana may be used in parliamentary debates and even a campaign since then to attempt to have the language declared an official language (cf. Nyati-Ramahobo, 1998). Because of the functional loading of English, the campaign is obviously not making any headway.

The language policy congruency theory of Schiffman (1998: 17-18) determines that the closer a country's policy approximates the language proficiency of its citizens, the greater the congruence ("fitness") of the policy with sociolinguistic reality. (Apparently only Japan and Portugal are examples of countries with virtually perfect language policy congruence, evidently because these are largely monolingual countries.) Schiffman proposes three criteria for ideal overt language policy congruence, namely official acknowledgement of the linguistic repertoires of the citizens, legitimisation of the status of language varieties and guarantees regarding the language-use rights of such varieties. Logically, it follows that a congruent language policy will have a greater chance of success. Schiffman also points out, however, that a language policy sometimes might consciously be incongruent for specific language political reasons (Schiffman, 1998: 54). Therefore, in order to be able to make an evaluation of the state of language policy in a country, the extent to which a particular overt policy correlates with the sociolinguistic practice should first be determined. A noticeable incongruence could indicate the existence of a covert language policy that is more congruent with language practice.

Language policy in South Africa

Studies of the language dispensation in South Africa mentioned earlier allude to the existence of an incongruent language policy. This would mean that there should be an investigation of the nature of the link between language policy (whether overt or covert) and language practice, taking into account the problems relating to such determination of correlation, as pointed out by Huebner (1999), Spolsky and Shohamy (1999) and Spolsky (2004). Unavoidably, the starting point would have to be a description of the sociolinguistic practice in South Africa. For the purposes of this contribution, a concise overview will suffice.

Sociolinguistic practice in South Africa

Studies relating to sociolinguistic practice in South Africa (cf. Webb, 2002: 63-98, as well as the various contributions in Mesthrie, 2002) indicate the occurrence of the typical diglossia described by Fishman (1968) as being the norm in the majority of African countries: the former colonial language (in this case English) is used for the higher and specialised registers and the African language is used for the lower registers. This diglossia is so prominent that it can be described as a characteristic of the linguistic culture of Africa. The functional load of the colonial language in the higher language-use domains is accepted to such an extent that people develop their linguistic repertoires accordingly. There is therefore no compelling necessity to extend these repertoires to also include the African language in the higher registers. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) have pointed out two exceptions, the Somalis and the Afrikaners, where strong language nationalism has been the incentive to break this pattern. Propelled by Afrikaner Nationalism, the Afrikaners indeed succeeded in establishing a specific variety of Afrikaans as a high-register language, which was followed accordingly by the development of linguistic repertoires, particularly during the heyday of the apartheid era.

As far as the use of the so-called mother tongue in high register domains is concerned, one should take note of at least two divergent language traditions in South Africa. For the majority of South Africans, the speakers of the indigenous African languages, their so-called mother tongue is suited for use in the low registers (family, friends, and so on) and is an important marker of socio-cultural identity. English, however, functions as a high-register language and is consequently also the language of upwardly social mobilisation (cf. Verhoef, 1998). For the Afrikaans speech community, in contrast, the standardised variety of Afrikaans is also suited for use as a high-register language and the language is in fact (albeit to a limited extent) used as such where the policy of affirmative action has not yet anglicised the work environment. At the same time, Afrikaans also serves as a marker of socio-cultural and socio-political identity. The so-called prescriptive urge (Edwards, 1995) will probably be present more strongly within this second tradition. An investigation into, among others, the quality of language use in the public media will most probably confirm this trend (cf. Geyser & Du Plessis, 2004).

A second trend highlighted by sociolinguistic studies is the issue regarding language demarcation in South Africa. The demarcation of eleven primary languages (that were eventually declared official languages) is viewed as highly problematic and mismatched with the sociolinguistic reality (cf. Boshego, 2002; Makoni, 1999; 2003; Murray, 2002). Data rather point to the existence of a sociolinguistic continuum between related African languages – the official demarcation is consequently questioned. Related to this is the established practice of code-switching, which is characteristic of urban language use in South Africa, particularly among the younger generation of urbanites.

A third trend identified by sociolinguistic studies is related to language ideology issues. The conception that English is viewed by a large portion of the South African population as the language of empowerment, of progress, of transformation, of political correctness, is difficult to dispute (cf. Kamwangamalu, 2001; Ridge, 2000a, 2000b; Wright, 2002).

What is significant is a clear discrepancy between linguistic register (the jurisdiction of language policy) and linguistic repertoire (the reality of language use), a problem that is repeatedly pointed out by Schiffman (1998). The question now is to what extent language policy development in South Africa takes this discrepancy into account.

Overt language policy

In terms of Schiffman's (1998) typology of language policy, South African language policy can be described as one that divides the high language registers between languages with differences in status, languages that dominate these registers (Afrikaans and English) and languages that play a subservient role in these registers (the so-called historically diminished or marginalised indigenous languages). In some cases, however, this division is less explicit than in the Indian language policy, which is a similar policy. Afrikaans and English, for example, are not explicitly prescribed as languages of tuition, but are nevertheless used as such implicitly. In other cases the policy is equally explicit, for example by only acknowledging the English text in the case of a legal dispute.

The high-register division, however, is theoretically regulated by explicit language policy stipulations that aim to try to correct the inequalities in status by means of legislative and other language policy measures. South Africa has thus selected an explicit, hands-on language policy model (cf. Faingold, 2004). Through a hands-on approach to language policy, the constitution spells out explicit stipulations regarding the use of official languages or national languages in a country, or it in any case contains specific language specifications, for example regarding languages to be used in education. Faingold (2004) recently determined that the majority of countries in the world follow a hands-on approach – of the 187 constitutions examined by him, 85% (159) can be classified as hands on and only 15% (28) can be classified as hands off. Examples of countries where a hands-off approach to language policy is followed are the USA, Australia, England, Israel, Taiwan and Swaziland. It could of course happen that hands-off

countries nevertheless implement language legislation, as in the USA with its renowned Bilingual Education Act of 1968, which makes initial mother tongue education possible for learners who do not have a command of English (cf. Del Valle, 2003: 224ff).

The extent of the constitutional stipulations for language in hands-on countries can naturally vary, but it forms part, among others, of what Turi (1995: 7) calls official language legislation. Official language legislation is legislation that regulates the use of language in four government domains: in legislation, in the legal authorities, in public administration and in education. We can distinguish further between primary language legislation (constitutional language stipulations and language laws), supplementary language legislation (other legal language stipulations in legislation that are not primarily related to language) and secondary language legislation (language regulations, language directives, and so on). Language policy documents that are generated by the state (for example discussion documents, green and white papers, language policy frameworks, and so on) function complementarily to language legislation. Some countries have extensive language legislation, such as Belgium and Quebec (Canada). Deprez, Du Plessis and Henrard (2000: 7) found, on the basis of studies of the situation in Belgium, that language legislation is indispensable for the “empowerment” of “weaker language communities”.

Except for the Language Clause (Section 6, Act 108 of 1996) of the Constitution, South Africa does not yet have further primary language legislation for official language-use domains. There is, however, supplementary language legislation for the various domains, but this has not yet been documented completely or studied in full (cf. DACST, 1999). Examples of this are Section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), which stipulates that the Minister of Education should determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools, Section 27(2) of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997), which stipulates that the Minister of Education must draw up policy on language at universities, and so on. With the South African Languages Bill, 2000 (Government Gazette 30 May 2003), an attempt was in fact made to develop a language act, but this has still not been promulgated as law.² Two “language acts” that have been promulgated since 1994 – the Pan South African Language Board Act (Act 59 of 1995, as amended in 1999) and the South African Geographical Names Council Act (Act 118 of 1998) – are related primarily to infrastructural measures concerning the official language dispensation. The latter, however, does regulate the official use of place names.

In the interim, South African policy makers tend to manage the language dispensation by means of language policy documents that flow from the constitutional language stipulations or other legislation containing language stipulations. Examples of these are the National Language Policy Framework (DAC, 2002), which creates a framework for the equivalent use of the official languages, the Language in Education Policy in terms of Section 3(4)(m) of the

² According to Mrs Jane Enslin, head of the Language Service of the Free State Government, Cabinet decided not to take the relevant legislation further. Personal communication on 12/10/05.

National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Government Notice No. 383, Vol. 17997), Norms and Standards regarding language policy published in terms of Section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Government Notice No. 383, Vol. 17997), which regulates language policy in schools, and the Language Policy for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, 2002), which regulates the official language dispensation at institutions of higher education.

In the South African case, the relevant option largely follows a language policy tradition that has been established locally since the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, namely it even expands on the tradition, but also tempers the prescriptive spirit of previous language stipulations. This therefore is a tradition that requires official (and explicit) language legislation (Turi, 1995).

The National Language Policy Framework (DAC, 2002) can probably be regarded as the most decisive overt policy document since 1994. This language policy framework goes the furthest to establish guidelines that will bring about a more equal high-register division of the official languages. The document contains actual plans regarding the implementation of the so-called rotation system (according to which six official languages should always be used), which indeed will expand the use of the disadvantaged official languages in the high registers and thus also will raise their status.

Regarding overt language policy development, South Africa has taken concrete steps since 1994. It remains questionable, however, whether this policy development has kept pace with the sociolinguistic practice that has been sketched. To what extent is there thus a real need for the use of an indigenous African language in the official language-use domains? The findings of Banda (2000: 63) on the mother tongue issue in education provide a good illustration of this dilemma:

Clearly, in South Africa, pupils and parents favour EMOI [English medium of instruction], while government language policy and academics insist on education in which the mother tongues of all South Africans are safeguarded.

One could indeed ask, on the basis of this type of issue, whether the attempts at language policy in government circles are not rather what seems to be what Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:196) call “top-down planning”.

Covert language policy

Studies on language policy implementation in South Africa indeed suggest that what is written on paper does not necessarily have results in practice, but rather that there is evidence of a “mismatch between South Africa’s multilingual language policy on the one hand, and language practices on the other. The language policy promotes additive multilingualism...while the language practices promote unilingualism in English”, as stated very accurately by Kamwangamalu (2001: 429; 2004: 265). Some of the key findings on the state of language policy development that have been reported in South Africa will be listed briefly:

- ☞ In institutions that were previously dominated by Afrikaans, such as the South African National Defence Force, Afrikaans is systematically being replaced by English without improving the position of the African languages in these domains (cf. De Klerk & Barkhuizen, 1998; De Klerk & Barkhuizen, 2002 for Correctional Services).
- ☞ The majority of (black) South Africans give preference to English as medium of instruction and reject the option of mother tongue education (cf. Banda, 2000; Verhoef, 1998).
- ☞ Government institutions are making slow progress with the implementation of a new, multilingual language policy or are making no progress at all (cf. Du Plessis, 2001, 2004; Ntshangase, 2000 on legislators; Strydom & Pretorius, 2000 on local government; Phaswana, 2003 on national government institutions; and Vinjevold, 1999 on education).
- ☞ Government institutions tend to promote “symbolic” multilingualism and “cosmetic” multilingualism, a trend that is evident in the publication of English documents with multilingual titles, on letterheads, and so on (cf. Martinez, 2000).
- ☞ The activities of the National Language Service and the Pan-South African Language Board overlap in a way that holds serious implications for language development (cf. Heugh, 2002; Webb, 2002).
- ☞ Where interpreting services do in fact exist, they are underutilised (cf. Pienaar, 2002).

It therefore would appear that there is a discrepancy between language policy and language practice. Verhoef (1998: 48) points pertinently to this “discrepancy between the *de jure* and *de facto* language situations in South Africa” and says that the “practical embodiment” of multilingualism is being shipwrecked. On the basis of her study of the language situation in schools in the North West Province (where she found that the dominance of English in education apparently did not bother her black experimental group), she draws two important conclusions:

- ☞ A language policy should be sensitive to the socio-cultural context in which it has to be implemented.
- ☞ It is meaningless to strive for functional multilingualism if the community has no need for multilingual skills.

These observations confirm Schiffman’s (1998) standpoint on language policy congruence. Where there is tension between what the language policy stipulates and what happens in language practice, this can usually be ascribed to the unsuitability of the policy and not vice versa. The study by Verhoef (1998) suggests that the overt South African language-in-education policy is clearly out of step with the sociolinguistic reality. The same conclusion could probably be drawn regarding the studies on other fields of language policy discussed above. This leads to the question whether the accents are being placed correctly in the evaluation of the implementation of language policy in South Africa. The repetitive nature of the discrepancy between language policy and language practice that arises here suggests that the overt language policy of South Africa is most likely mismatched with the sociolinguistic reality. This further suggests

that, in these particular cases, there probably exists a covert language policy that largely matches this reality

Evaluation: language policy congruence in South Africa

The overt policy of South Africa admittedly does grant official acknowledgement to eleven official languages, although the questions that arise, should we wish to apply Schiffman's criteria for language policy congruence, are whether it grants acknowledgement to the actual linguistic repertoires of the citizens, whether their language varieties are legitimised and whether the constitutional guarantees regarding language-use rights are applicable to these varieties. It would rather appear that the supposed overt language policy is tuned into very specific language varieties and does not necessarily take into account the actual linguistic repertoires of the speakers (cf. Makoni, 2003 in this regard). Sociolinguistic studies indicate that diglossia and code-switching are very pertinent characteristics of the linguistic repertoires of a large portion of the population, while the overt language policy actually requires parallel bilingualism in precisely demarcated language varieties.

Hibbert (2004), for example, emphasises the growing role of "African Englishes" as a prominent sociolinguistic reality that establishes an additional perspective on covert language policy, which indeed should be investigated further (cf. also Bernsten, 2001 in this regard). These types of studies raise new questions that can partially be used as counter-arguments. Nevertheless, the question needs to be asked whether the relevant variations correlate with the supposed high-register form of English, which implies that the relevant phenomenon represents a new form of diglossia. Similarly, Ridge's (2000a) emphasis of the prominent, consistent use of African languages during the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could also be an example of a language reality where the African languages did in fact begin to enjoy prominence (cf. also Janks, 2001). In the latter regard, however, the question is whether the relevant language-use domain within which the African languages were used at the hearings truly requires the high-function register. Du Plessis (2003) argues that the language-use situation at the TRC indeed was a national audiovisual demonstration of the relative permanence of the diglossic pattern. The evidence that was produced, for example, was not recorded in the African language and the entire structure of the hearings entrenched the diglossia that is under discussion here.

If the earlier conclusion is correct, it means that a covert language policy for different language policy terrains is developing at ground level in South Africa and that this policy more closely approximates the established language practice of diglossia and code-switching. This covert language policy apparently also displays greater sensitivity for the language preferences of South Africans than is supposed by the overt policy (as contained in language legislation and language policy documents). It is a ground-level policy that acknowledges the actual linguistic repertoires of the citizens, legitimises their language varieties and actually provides guarantees regarding language-use rights at ground level. Various studies on language policy implementation in fact highlight this

perspective, although largely unintentionally. This is done in some of the studies to which reference has already been made, but a few further examples will be dealt with briefly.

Verhoef (1998), for example, finds by implication that the practice of diglossia is so well established as “language policy” (cf. Schiffman, 1998) in the black community that she investigated that there was no compelling need among the speakers of the African language concerned to use these languages in the high-register functions. English already fulfils this function. It appears from her investigation that the African languages rather fulfil an important socio-cultural function in the low registers. The instrumental value of English is therefore rated highly within the black community, while the African languages have a considerable sentimental or symbolic value.

Barkhuizen and De Klerk (2002) provide sociolinguistic evidence regarding the language-use situation within a specific prison community that displays strong resemblance to Verhoef’s study in the field of teaching. They namely find that, in the particular community that they investigated, Xhosa is widely used for non-official (thus low register) functions and that English is used for high-register functions. (Cf. also De Klerk & Barkhuizen, 1998; 2002.)

Ridge (2000a) deals with different language-use domains and makes similar findings regarding the growing appearance of diglossia surrounding English and the African languages. (Cf. also Kamwangamalu, 2001.)

These and other language policy studies thus emphasise the covert language policy patterns that will most likely not easily be abolished by overt language policy planning. The populist covert language policy within specific communities essentially strives for the maintenance of the Fishman-projected diglossia that occurs in developing communities. In contrast, the overt language policy of the country presupposes a form of parallel bilingualism (as minimum requirement). The covert language policy as yet does not make provision for the expansion of the high-register functions, which are occupied by English (and Afrikaans, to an extent), to the African languages.

It is significant that the situation in the Afrikaans speech community approximately forms a mirror image of that in the black community. The discrepancy between overt and covert language policy is much smaller and the occurrence of diglossia (at least provisionally) much less. The language preferences of Afrikaans speakers also differ. Afrikaans speakers still can provisionally use Afrikaans as high-register language and the language, by its very nature, is suited for this purpose. This practice is fed by an Afrikaans education system and, apparently, the desire to maintain it is still present. At the same time, there is immense pressure on this practice to make greater concessions to the role of English within the system. The current public debate on the role of English at formerly Afrikaans-language institutions of higher education underlines this argumentation.

The discrepancy between overt language policy congruence in the black community and in the Afrikaans community obviously creates a dilemma for the

language decision maker, a dilemma that is exacerbated by the hands-on language policy model selected by South Africa. The overt policy presupposes a gain in language function for the African languages, an objective that clearly runs contrary to the language policy practice on the ground; the covert policy, on the other hand, in effect presupposes a loss of language function for Afrikaans to thereby achieve equal status with the African languages – naturally a sensitive situation. A special language strategy is therefore required that accounts for the language practice of the majority of the population and that does not necessarily wish to see greater instrumental value being awarded to the African languages. Under these circumstances, a *laissez-faire* approach to language policy thus offers a solution. This could include steps to institute symbolic or cosmetic multilingualism (Martinez, 2000) that does in fact award a specific symbolic function to the African languages, but underwrites the instrumental value of English (a strategy that naturally will threaten the acquired position of Afrikaans).

Because the South African language policy eventually was the result of a political compromise, it is obvious that the sociolinguistic practice was not necessarily taken into account. A policy was formulated that largely boils down to an extension of a *de jure* official situation in which the eleven demarcated main languages already enjoy official status, although not all at national level. Symbolic considerations rather than instrumental considerations clearly predominated here. The *de facto* position of English was not directly taken into account in the policy.

Conclusion

This overview has focused on the link between language policy development and language practice in South Africa. An attempt was made to determine how fitting (constitutionally prescribed) overt language policy in South Africa is on the basis of Schiffman's (1998) theory of language policy congruency and South African language policy studies. This was done by means of a brief discussion of studies of sociolinguistic reality. The occurrence of (stable) diglossia regarding high- and low-function domains stands out in the relevant studies as one of the primary characteristics of this reality. On the other hand, the high occurrence of code-switching in any of these domains, but particularly in the low language-use domain, is noticeable as a characteristic of the South African sociolinguistic reality. Furthermore, the initiatives taken at the overt language policy level were examined and it was concluded that, in comparison with language practice on the ground, these initiatives appear quite forced and could even be typified as top-down planning. It would appear that overt language policy provisionally does not take place with a view to the legitimisation of the language reality of South Africans.

An attempt was also made to determine whether there are signs of covert language policy, thus language situations where there is consensus on fixed language-use patterns that could qualify as language decision making in terms of Schiffman's (1998) view. Although further investigations are needed regarding the latter terrain, the findings contained in the existing studies indicate that such

consensus is probably being developed, both in low- and high-function domains. Speakers of African languages in particular appear to distinguish relatively systematically between the application of the African languages in demarcated low-function domains and the use of English in high-function domains. Studies in the field of language shift might nevertheless begin to point out the development of other trends, particularly regarding the language use of urban citizens (cf. Kamwangamalu, 2003, among others).

It was determined that there is an inclination to measure the achievements relating to supposed overt language policy in South Africa against significant correlations with language practice. The assumption here is therefore that the language practice will react suitably to language policy interventions. Several studies on language policy implementation emphasise precisely such an assumed correlation. This overview, however, argues for a different approach that questions whether the overt language policy deals with the language reality at ground level in an appropriate manner, in other words whether the overt language policy thus is indeed suited to the sociolinguistic language reality. This study determined that there is evidence in specific language-use domains for reasonably fixed agreements relating to mutual language arrangements, which could indicate the legitimisation of specific language-use patterns. Such agreements could point to the existence of covert language policy within specific language-use domains, at least as far as Afrikaans speakers are concerned. This covert language policy (actually, populist language policy) acknowledges and legitimises diglossia as a sociolinguistic given in South Africa, particularly as regards the relationship between English (which functions as a high-register language) and the indigenous African language (which functions as a low-register language), and also acknowledges and legitimises code-switching, two of the prominent characteristics of the sociolinguistic reality in South Africa.

The question that thus arises is whether overt language policy development in South Africa eventually will be able to (or rather should) bridge the gap to sociolinguistic practice. In the light of Schiffman's (1998) language policy congruency theory, such a question could also be approached differently. The apparent reluctance to develop official language legislation or to apply existing language legislation (and language policy) purposefully within a so-called top-down model possibly indicates sensitivity among language decision makers for covert language policy at ground level. As Tosco (2004: 179) remarks, probably quite relevantly, "(i)t is indeed a policy not to have a policy". In Labovian terms, it is also possible to ask further about the extent to which this covert language policy could be an example of bottom-up language policy and whether there is not already pressure to adjust the overt language policy accordingly (and, indeed, whether this does not already take place in practice).

Of course, there should be further deliberation on the implications of the view, presented by this contribution, for the position of Afrikaans and, naturally, for the intention that still exists in some circles to continue struggling with language development in the indigenous African languages. More incisive policy analyses are therefore essential for determining whether the current language policy design in South Africa does in fact lay the foundation for a bottom-up approach to

language policy. The editorial language policy of the SABC, a policy that is subject to non-official language legislation (cf. Du Plessis, 2005), does appear to be an example where such a type of approach is in fact applied with a reasonable degree of success.

However, it is of particular importance that investigations of language policy implementation in South Africa concentrate less on the projected correlation between overt language policy and language practice. The conclusion drawn by Spolsky and Shohamy (1999: 262) should be taken to heart. According to them, it is profoundly fallacious to think that language policy and language planning (thus a language management approach) can change language practice, “(a)s in most cases of social planning, the failures come from inability to take into account the myriad factors which act and interact on language practice”. More attention needs to be paid to the description of covert language policy realisations in order to develop a better understanding of this phenomenon and to be able to consider the impact of bottom-up language planning. The increasing interest in research on the linguistic landscape (cf. Gorter, 2006 among others) could make an important contribution in this regard. In fact, all considered, greater scholarly interest is needed in so-called ‘multilingualism from below’.

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The emergence of “new mother tongues” in Africa and its implications: The example of Cameroon¹

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We argue that the role of language is often overestimated and the dominant emphasis on languages rather than on their speakers appears to be rooted in shortcomings in the philosophical-linguistic basis of the [rationalist and romantic] models” (Dirven and Polzenhagen in Rationalist or romantic model in language policy and globalisation, 2004).

Introduction

The expression *mother tongue* and related terms like *native English* and *first language* have traditionally referred to one of the indigenous languages of the area from which one hails. But new sociolinguistic phenomena emerging in urban centres are compelling a redefinition of the notion, which, in turn, has implications for other linguistic concepts and beliefs. The present paper examines the situation for Cameroon, which is rendered particularly prone to these phenomena by certain sociolinguistic, historical, political and social factors.

The facts

No large-scale sociolinguistic investigation has been conducted in Cameroon since the 1978 survey of language use in urban centres, which, *inter alia*, yielded a publication by Koenig, Chia and Povey (1983). However, although the language situation of the country is notoriously complex, some major sociolinguistic trends are clearly identifiable. One of these trends is evident in the low profile of indigenous languages in urban centres, which are dominated by English and French, as well as Pidgin English. Bitja’a Kody’s (2000, 2001a) findings from a small-scale investigation conducted in Yaounde generally confirm this. These results, as seen in Table 1, show that French and English are by far the main tools for communication for Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians respectively, at home, in the street, at the market and in the office. Bitja’a Kody’s research consisted of questionnaire-based surveys on randomly selected samples of informants in different geographic areas and different domains of use in the (predominantly Francophone) capital city of Cameroon. I find it safe to use the author’s findings, as they largely confirm my impressionistic assessment of language use in this locality. In fact, the works of other writers on the functions of

European languages in Cameroon (e.g. Wamba & Gerard, 2002; Zang Zang, 2006) are in line with the trends reported here.

Table 1: Language use in various domains by parents and children in Yaounde (Bitja'a Kody, 2001a)

		Home		Street		Market		Office	
		Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parents	Children
FRANCOPHONES	AL1	52.12%	31.32	34.47	21.03	16.43	5.17	15.57	6.29
	AL2	4.24	4.52	6.87	1.71	21.91	13.79	1.50	00
	French	42.77	66.03	49.47	77.23	50.68	72.41	73.36	90.20
	English	0.56	0.75	3.70	00	1.36	1.72	9.54	3.49
ANGLOPHONES	AL1	51.04	40.57	29.52	26.31	00	00	11.66	6.38
	AL2	9.37	8.69	1.90	4.26	00	00	1.66	8.51
	English	35.41	43.47	40.92	46.05	7.14	20	61.66	55.31
	French	4.16	7.24	24.76	22.36	71.42	66.66	25	29.78

AL1: 1st African language; AL2: 2nd African language

The parents' choices of language for their children, as well as the children's choices for their own children (see Table 2), confirm the expected continued dominance in the future of the exoglossic languages in the Cameroonian landscape.

Table 2: Language preference for children in Yaounde (Bitja'a Kody, 2001a)

	Language parents would like children to speak best				Language children would like own children to speak best			
	AL1	AL2	OL1	OL2	AL1	AL2	OL1	OL2
F	56.25%	00	20.33	22.91	38.63	11.36	22.72	27.72
A	50	00	50	00	50	00	50	00

F: Francophone; A: Anglophone; AL1: 1st African language; AL2: 2nd African language; OL1: 1st official language; OL2: 2nd official language

What can be expected in the future is revealed in the number of speakers whose most expressive language is one of the official (exoglossic) languages. This is already high among parents, and is rising considerably among the children; for example, while 45,45% of Anglophone parents express themselves best in English, the percentage among the youth of the same Anglophone population rises to 72,72%. (See Table 3 for a more comprehensive picture of Bitja'a Kody's 2001 findings.)

Table 3: Language in which parents and children in Yaounde express themselves best (Bitja’a Kody, 2001a)

	Most expressive language of parents					Most expressive language of children				
	AL1	AL2	AL3	OL1	OL2	AL1	AL2	AL3	OL1	OL2
FRAN	67.39	00	00	30.43	2.17	19.56	2.17	00	76.08	2.17
ANGL	54.54	00	00	45.45	00	18.18	00	00	72.72	9.09
F&A	64.91	00	00	33.33	1.75	19.28	1.75	00	75.43	3.50
N	57					57				

In extreme cases, children do not speak any local language at all. For example, Bitja’a Kody (2001b) reports that 32% of young informants from 10 to 17 years of age in Yaounde do not speak any Cameroonian language, with French being the only means of communication. Wamba and Gerard (2002) associate the emergence of European languages as the sole languages of communication at home to exogamic marriages. But this is only a partial explanation for the phenomenon, as French is also the exclusive language of communication in many endogamic homes.

The above sociolinguistic facts clearly set Yaounde apart from other African capitals. In terms of patterns of language use (the focus in this paper), we, for example, are definitely far from the situation in Bamako, where Bambara is reported by Calvet (n.d.: 197) to be used 78% of the time, Soninke 10%, French only 4%, Fulla 3%, Songhay 2% and other languages 4% of the time.

The conspicuous absence of Pidgin English in the foregoing picture is due to the fact that the reported study was carried out in Yaounde, which is not an area of Pidgin English dominance. Otherwise, this idiom is one of those that increasingly assume the function of mother tongue. A survey by Koenig *et al.* (1983) and one by D’Epie (1998), presented in Table 4, show Pidgin English to be used as mother tongue by a large percentage of Anglophone children in some towns.

Table 4: Pidgin English as mother tongue of Anglophone children in some cities

Town	Koenig <i>et al.</i> , 1983	D’Epie, 1998
Mamfe	25%	24%
Bamenda	22	25
Kumba	19	22
Buea	26	28
Limbe	31	30
Douala (Francophone town)	% not available	10
Yaounde (Francophone town)	% not available	15

Despite its ever-increasing gain of territory, Pidgin English is not very popular, especially in some educational institutions, which expressly ban it. These educational institutions include many primary, secondary and high schools throughout the country. They also include the GCE (General Certificate of

Education) Board premises in Buea, where “No Pidgin” signboards are pasted on the walls. There is another interesting case: the University of Buea, whose campus is covered in placards conveying the following messages:

No Pidgin on campus, please.

Pidgin is taking a heavy toll on your English; shun it.

L’Anglais, un passport pour le monde; le pidgin, un ticket pour nulle part.

[English, a passport to the world; Pidgin, a pass for nowhere.]

The medium of studies at UB is English, not Pidgin. (UB=University of Buea)

If you speak Pidgin, you will write pidgin.

English is the password, not Pidgin.

No Pidgin on campus, please.

Speak less Pidgin and more English.

The better you speak Pidgin, the worse you will write English.

Speak a language well to write a language well.

Be my friend, speak English.

Succeed at UB by avoiding Pidgin on campus.

Commonwealth speaks English, not Pidgin.

Notwithstanding such bans, Pidgin English seems to have come to stay in Cameroon.

In order to verify that, in many cases, French, English and Pidgin English have indeed taken over the status of mother tongue, Skutnabb-Kangas’s (1981: 13) table on the various parameters for definitions of *mother tongue* is of interest.

Table 5: Definitions of “mother tongue” according to Skutnabb-Kangas (1981: 13)

Criterion	Definition of “mother tongue”	Discipline
Origin	the language one learnt first (the language in which one established one’s first lasting communication relationship)	sociology
Competence	the language one knows best	linguistics
Function	the language one uses most	sociolinguistics
Attitudes	the language one identifies with (internal identification)	social psychology psychology of the individual
	the language one is identified as a native speaker of by other people (external identification)	social psychology sociology
(automacy) (world view)	(the language one counts in, thinks in, dreams in, writes a diary in, writes poetry in, etc.)	Popular conceptions

Clearly, English and French, for a large majority of children in Yaounde, and Pidgin English, elsewhere, assume the functions of *mother tongue*, from most, if not

all of the perspectives considered by Skutnabb-Kangas. For these children, English or French would be denied the status of mother tongue only if the notion is defined genetically, not linguistically, as discussed later in this study. Indeed, for most of these children, the correct label for what we conventionally call, for example, *mother tongue education*, might have to be changed to *indigenous* or *local language education*.

The population to which these findings can be generalised is quite large, given that the rural exodus has pushed a good portion of the rural population to the cities. Yaounde alone has about 1.5 million inhabitants, and Douala about 2.5 million, which makes 4 million for the two major cities only, that is, a quarter of the population of about 16 million.

Factors leading to the situation

Several sociolinguistic, historical, political and social factors account for the facts reported above.

Despite the well-argued optimism of some commentators (e.g. Chumbow, 2005), the extreme complexity of the linguistic landscape of Cameroon is not a negligible threat to the use of indigenous languages. The fact that more than 286 languages are spoken over the national territory by some 16 million inhabitants (a ratio of just over 50 000 inhabitants to a language) means a high concentration of languages in a given geographical area, leading to the search for a common language for communication, which can only be Pidgin English, French or English. This is the situation faced in Cameroon by colleagues in the workplace, neighbours, school mates, spouses in a home (sometimes), domestic workers and the children, and so on.

The situation in Cameroon is exacerbated by the fact that no indigenous language has been able to acquire national status like Bambara in Mali, Wolof in Senegal, or Sango in the Central African Republic. Indeed, it is interesting to note the contrast between the positions of these languages in Bamako, Dakar and Bangui respectively, and that of Ewondo, the language of the indigenes of Yaounde, the capital city, which is spoken by only about 10% of the inhabitants of the capital, and nationally by only 4% of the population.

As is well known, the fate of the indigenous languages in Cameroon is largely the legacy of the French colonial language policy, which was continued after independence, even in the Anglophone, formerly British, part of a predominantly Francophone country. France considered itself entrusted with a *mission civilisatrice* (civilising mission) towards its colonies, which was to consist of the promotion of French culture and language at the expense of the cultures and languages of the colonised. This accounts for the repression of indigenous languages in French colonies, a situation that was only slowly overturned in the post-colonial era in some countries. France’s “civilising mission” was in sharp contrast to Britain’s Indirect Rule, which meant, *inter alia*, that the colonised territories were allowed to preserve their cultures and languages.

Cameroon's sluggish language policy today is a clear reflection of the colonial mentality. More than four decades after independence, no serious provision is made in the basic laws of the country regarding the local languages. It is the 1996 Constitution that, for the first time, even makes mention of them, in a very non-committal statement. In fact, the only stipulation in that Constitution regarding indigenous languages is that the state "shall work towards the protection and promotion of national languages" (Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon 1996).

A further reason for the low profile of indigenous languages in Cameroon is the same decision makers' perception of what is useful for them and their children. As Chumbow (2005) rightly observes, there is no consensus among politicians themselves on the use of local languages, especially in terms of their incorporation into the school system. In fact, in their competition with local languages in Africa, European languages are always judged in terms of the educational and professional advantages they procure. Even in countries where the status of African languages is much higher, this perception still largely prevails. For example, in South Africa, where some nine languages are co-official with English and Afrikaans, Van der Walt and Mabule (2000: 265) report the following perceptions in response to a question on attitudes towards the use of African languages in education:

- ☞ Stick to English; it is the only language that caters for all African people;
- ☞ All [languages] are important, but English is better for science;
- ☞ Encourage children to use English even outside class;
- ☞ After academic [studies] (sic), students go to foreign countries where they need English.

A large number of Cameroonians espouse these views to an even greater extent. In a country where it is fashionable for the elite to send their children to Fustel de Coulanges (a local French school) or to the American School, it is difficult to expect more favourable attitudes to the use of African languages from this elite.

In fact, there is a Cameroonian factor that prevails beyond even the colonial factor discussed above, in the sense that some African countries that have experienced the same colonial rule have given the local languages a higher status. Indeed, many African countries, even among the most committed defenders of French interests in Africa, now have a viable language policy that has expressly integrated the local languages. For example, in Sedar Senghor's and Abdou Diouf's Senegal, although French remains the sole *official* language, six selected languages used in formal education, namely Wolof, Pulaar, Serere, Joola, Soninke and Mandinka, have the status of *national* languages. The slow rise in status of indigenous languages in Cameroon is in great part due to a marked adherence to Western, especially French, ways of life, which is known to be characteristic of some African countries like Cameroon and Gabon, and is perceived in other domains. Thus, it may not be out of place to report anecdotally, after the (Cameroon-based) *Le Messenger* newspaper of February 2, 2005, that Cameroon

and Gabon are the greatest African consumers of Champagne, one of the most expensive French wines and one of the greatest marks of French culture.

A final, but by no means negligible, factor accounting for the dominance of European languages in Cameroon is the high rate of literacy in these languages. Information gathered from several internet (e.g. the UNICEF website) and print sources indicates that the rate of literacy in Cameroon is about 68%, one of the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared, for example, to 48.5% in the Ivory Coast, 41% in Senegal, and 26% in Chad. It can be argued that Cameroonians use exoglossic languages more often than some other countries partly because they *can* use them better.

Implications and problems

The first problem with new languages taking over the status of mother tongues is emotional and cultural. The long-term consequence of this trend is the death of local languages. Bitja'a Kody (2001b) estimates that the population of 32% of children between 10 and 17 years of age in Yaounde who do not speak any local language and have only French as their language of communication will grow exponentially in the next generation; the young generation, which cannot speak the local languages today, will obviously not be able to transmit them to their own children. This will be a considerable loss, as Todd (1999: 31) rightly laments: “I shall also highlight the sadness and pain of all people who have lost or are losing their mother tongues. They carry an extraordinary emotional burden: namely that we can lose an entire civilization when we lose a language.” Echoing George Steiner, Todd (1999: 31) goes on to say that each dying language takes with it “a storehouse of consciousness”. Todd is well placed to know what she is talking about, having Irish, an endangered language, as her mother tongue. The gradual loss of local languages is occurring at a time when indigenous and provincial languages (Gaelic, Scots, Welsh, Catalan, Corse, Provençal) are experiencing a quick revival in several parts of Europe.

The loss of local languages will entail the loss of a good part of the local culture. Arguments to temper the condemnation of the spread of international languages like English and French include the claim that, indigenised, they can be used to express the cultures of the communities into which they are transplanted. Arguably, ideological titles like Mendo Ze's (1999a and 1999b) *Le Français, Langue Africaine* and *Le Français, notre langue*, which can be translated into English respectively as “French, an African language” and “French, our language”, support this view as far as French is concerned. The claim that a European language can accurately express the African culture is, however, largely controversial.

The above findings have many other implications outside the emotional and the cultural. First of all, they suggest that one cannot realistically have one model of language planning or mother tongue education for the whole country. The one to match the realities of the cities will necessarily be different to the one for rural areas.

Secondly and more importantly, the findings compel us to a reconsideration of the very rationale and main motivation behind the whole enterprise of mother tongue education, at least in big cities. As is well known, there has been a lot of pressure from outside, as well as from some academics inside the country, in favour of the education of children in their indigenous languages. Calls from outside, made to all the countries concerned, include the 1953 UNESCO Report on *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*, the OAU *Plan of Action for Africa*, the 1994 UNESCO-OAU commissioned study on "The definition of strategies for the promotion of African languages in a multilingual environment" (Philipson, 1992: 161), Article 5 of the United Nations' Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Asmara Declaration, and so on. Calls from inside have been mostly from academics, especially from the pressure group comprising linguists from the universities and research institutes supported by the local SIL team. The inclusion of the debate on mother tongue education on the agenda of the 1995 Forum on Education, and the subsequent mention, for the first time, of the promotion of African languages in the 1996 Constitution, are in great part the fruits of this pressure.

The reader will recall that the main justification for the urgent need to teach children in the local languages is to ease the burden on pupils who hitherto have had to learn in a language (English or French) that they supposedly did not know. If the majority of children in Yaounde or Douala are taught in English or French, which is the language they learnt first, the language they know best, the language they use most (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981), and the language they prefer (Bitja'a Kody's findings), it is difficult to say that these children would fare better if the teaching were done in an African language. In fact, one could even go as far as saying that it is the teaching in an African language, unknown to them, which would be a burden. An insistence on "mother tongue" education would first of all mean teaching the children the "mother tongue", before using it for education, a route which is longer and more costly than the model of mother tongue education that is traditionally considered.

It is often said that one of the causes of massive failure in the Cameroonian system of education is the use of foreign languages for teaching. Again, in the light of Bitja'a Kody's findings, this claim may have to be reconsidered. We may have to look mostly on the side of the many problems that affect education in Cameroon for the explanation. But more importantly, it is the difference between the type of language used for education, and the type of language the children know, use and are exposed to, which is probably the problem.

Indeed, it must be clearly and emphatically stated that the type of English or French that is said to have taken up the function of mother tongue for many Cameroonian children is NOT British/American English or Parisian French. It is the Cameroonian variety of English or French, which has been abundantly shown in the literature to be markedly different from the textbook and some teachers' variety, and in the case of which the degree of intelligibility may sometimes be very low. Concerning English, most cases of failure in intelligibility involve pronunciation, the level that has been investigated most commonly in the literature. For example, Talom (1990), who had the local British Council Director

read words like *coveted*, and other common words like *biased*, *fuel*, *survey*, *pestle* to Upper Sixth (end of high school) students, and subsequent work by Simo Bobda (1994a), reports several cases of intelligibility failure, including the following pronunciation features among highly educated speakers of Cameroon English.

Table 6: Intelligibility of some RP forms in Cameroon

Word	British reader	Subjects’ understanding	Subjects’ pronunciation of the word
coveted	[ˈkʌvɪtɪd]	cavity, carvity	[kɔːvetɛt]
biased	[baɪəst]	buyers	[baːjas]
survey (N)	[ˈsɜːveɪ]	service	[sɔːve]
pestle	[pɛsl]	percy	[pɪstəl]
fuel	[fjuəl]	few	[fuːəl]
mayor	[meɪə]	?	[ˈmeɪɔ]
martyr	[mɑːtə]	?	[ˈmataja]

Atechi (2004) provides an even more comprehensive investigation of two-way intelligibility between Cameroon English (CamE) speakers on the one hand and British and American English speakers on the other hand. Predictably, there are huge instances of intelligibility failure both ways. But having given the above examples of intelligibility failure from CamE speakers to British and American listeners (see Table 6), I will give only some examples of intelligibility failure between CamE speakers and British and American listeners (see Table 7).

Table 7: Some examples of intelligibility failure between CamE speakers and British and American listeners

CamE speaker’s pronunciation	British/American listeners’ understanding
[ˈmalaria] <i>malaria</i>	mat layer
[ˈhampa] <i>hamper</i>	harm part
[e digri holda] <i>a degree holder</i>	address hold that
[rɛmuniːrɛʃɔn] <i>remuneration</i>	red moon...
[ˈkauntri] <i>country</i>	count it
[ˈsɔpɔt] <i>support</i>	saw port
to [kɔp] <i>corruption</i> (curb)	Cork
<i>people’s</i> [ˈhats] (hearts)	Hats
<i>In the</i> [ˈfɛs] <i>year</i> (first)	Face
[tru] <i>sensitization</i> (through)	True
<i>what I</i> [ˈtɔt] (thought)	Taught
<i>in the</i> [ˈwɔl] (world)	War

No comprehensive study has been done on lexis, grammar and pragmatics, but we can predict that such a study would confirm a hypothesised high rate of intelligibility failure between the students' English and the English of the textbooks, for instance. As an illustration, the following differences between Cameroon English and British English (from Simo Bobda, 1994b, 2002) are potential causes of serious communication breakdown:

Table 8: Some differences between CamE and BrE lexical features with consequences on intelligibility

CamE item	Meaning in BrE
trouble-shooter	trouble-maker
workmanship (e.g. paid to a tailor)	labour
terrible	(also means) terrific, great
wonderful	(also means) terrible

In the light of this table, imagine a simple arithmetic lesson or exercise involving the calculation of a tailor's *labour* for some work, and the intelligibility problem it would pose.

Similar examples can be found in French where, for example, the simple word *acheter* (buy) is quickly disappearing from the language of school children, being replaced by *payer* (pay); e.g. *Je vais payer la banane* (standard French: *Je vais acheter une banane* [I am going to buy a banana]); where the confusion between the direct object pronouns *le/la/les* and the indirect ones (*lui/leur*) is rampant enough to cause a communication breakdown; e.g. *Je l'ai donné* (standard French: *Je lui ai donné* [I have given him]); *Je lui vu* (Standard French: *Je l'ai vu* [I have seen him.])

The dilemma, of course, is whether to teach the children and write the textbooks in this kind of English and French in order to be intelligible to the majority (an extreme decision that few would like to take), or to stick to the sometimes unintelligible foreign model of these languages. One other alternative for Anglophone children in big cities is the use of Pidgin English, in which many of them are more competent. But the hurdle is the low status of the idiom in Cameroon, as discussed above.

The theoretical implications of the emergence of non-indigenous mother tongues include the need to reconsider labels referring to the status of the languages in the sociolinguistic landscape. For example, as shown throughout the study, notions like *mother tongue* and related concepts like *native language*, *first language*, *second language* must be revisited. The classification of one's language into any of these categories has tremendous implications and consequences for teaching and learning, error analysis, staff recruitment, and so on. The fact, for example, that the Cameroonian varieties of English and French, though markedly different from, and sometimes unintelligible to, older mother tongue varieties, have acquired a mother tongue function, must be borne in mind when designing teaching materials for the learners involved. The materials cannot be those designed for the learner of French from France or the learner of English from

Britain. Nor should they be those meant for the traditional second language learners. To parallel the label *new Englishes*, now accepted worldwide, there is the need to promote expressions like *new mother tongue*, *new first language*, and consequent labels like *ENFL*, *ENMT*, *ENNL* (English as a New First Language, English as a New Mother Tongue, English as a New Native Language), and so on.

The way errors in these new mother tongues are accounted for should also change accordingly. For example, some deviations from older norms of exoglossic languages like English and French found in the speech of Africans have traditionally been attributed to the influence or interference of the mother tongue. For the types of English or French uses discussed above, this explication is not quite tenable, except in a historical or social sense, that is, in an indirect way. One's English or French cannot be influenced directly by a language one does not know. The explanation is accepted only if the influence has exerted itself through the teachers, parents, peers or society at large, whose English or French has undoubtedly been shaped in great part by the influence of the substratum language(s) on which they were superimposed.

On the basis of the evidence provided so far, notions like *mother tongue* and *first language*, and related expressions like *native speaker*, in their traditional perception, are genetic rather than linguistic, as they exclude the type of mother tongue speakers discussed in this paper, who can legitimately lay claim to native ownership, in their own way, of English and French. The exclusion of the “new” native speaker is common, if not systematic, in the linguistic literature and in the language teaching profession, with tremendous implications and consequences. Take the example of English. Although Paikeday (1985), representing many current views, proclaims emphatically that “the native speaker is dead”, the spectre of the so-called “native English” and of the “native speaker”, in the traditional sense, continues to haunt the entire English-speaking world.

Despite all the literature on the legitimacy of New Englishes, many leading ELT professionals continue to see, either implicitly or explicitly, the English of the Inner Circle as the only suitable model for teaching. Thus, in an interview granted by Michael A. Halliday to Jacqueline Lam Lam Kam-Mei (2002: 13), the veteran linguist prescribes that (only) “modern teaching materials that come from British sources [and British teachers]” are suitable for ELT in Hong Kong. As regards pronunciation, Halliday further declares the BBC and Australian and New Zealand models to be *the* ones to follow in Hong Kong. Halliday's tolerance extends to American English, but not beyond.

The myth of the native speaker is also present in ELT staff recruitment. Waleign (1986), in his pathetic cry of “Non-native speakers need not apply”, denounced the discrimination that reigns on the ELT job market against non-native teachers, pointing out that employers prefer “marginally qualified native speakers” to well-qualified non-native applicants. The situation has not changed today, and there are no prospects for a forthcoming change. Bamgbose (2001: 360) reports “a so-called ‘Global English School in Thailand’ boasting on its internet homepage that “all our English teachers are native speakers”. In Cameroon, to justify a drastic

rise in school fees at its ELT centre, the British Council sent out advertising leaflets in the 1990s telling its customers that the new fees were going to be used to recruit “native speakers” of English. Some of these native speakers turned out to be first-degree holders, sometimes in disciplines other than English, and with no professional qualification. Recruitments into other British- or American-owned institutions and firms in Cameroon, such as Guinness and British-American Tobacco, even for positions not primarily involving the use of English, generally involve an interview in which the applicant’s degree of approximation to Inner Circle English is an important asset for the applicant.

The myth of the native speaker is such that, in order to qualify to write a report on proficiency in English for many international grants, the qualification in English language does not matter much, with emphasis being laid on origin. For example, when applying for a Fulbright scholarship, the person reporting on the applicant’s English proficiency must be one of the following: “a Director of Courses in English at a Binational Centre, a Professor of English *whose Native Language is English*, an Official of the U.S. Embassy or Fulbright Commission” (see the Fulbright form on the US Embassy website at: <http://www.iie.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Fulbright>, emphasis added).

Several journals and publishing houses require that manuscripts for publication from non-native writers be submitted for the sanction of native speakers. For example, the notes for contributors to *Forensic Linguistics* stipulates that “authors whose native language is not English are asked to have their manuscript checked carefully before submission” (Notes for contributors, 339). In this particular prescription, no reference is made to the English proficiency of the person who is to check the manuscript. The second illustration is from Mouton de Gruyter (2002: 2) whose “Style sheet for authors and editors preparing camera-ready copy” indicates that authors are responsible for “having the material carefully checked by a native speaker of English if they are not native speakers themselves”.

Indeed, as Brutt-Griffler and Saminy (2001: 99) rightly assert, echoing earlier reflections (Braine, 1999; Phillipson, 1992), the “native speaker fallacy” continues to complicate and even thwart the ELT careers of many professionals, who find themselves on the wrong side of the divide. What further frustrates these professionals is that the definition of the concept of “native speaker”, as used to discriminate among applicants for jobs, often is not linguistic, but genetic: it does not even refer to somebody who has acquired English from birth and has used it natively all along, but generally to a speaker from a mother tongue English country. The situation of Laura, reported by Brutt-Griffler and Saminy (2001: 101), is a vivid illustration of this phenomenon. Laura was born in the Philippines and learnt English first. She attended English-medium schools from kindergarten to high school. Laura reports writing and reading almost exclusively in English (99%, the remaining 1% of the time being used for Tagalog). Yet, in her professional pursuits in the United States, she is identified as a non-native speaker all the time and had to take the TOEFL twice, once for her MA studies and the second time for her doctoral studies.

Further illustrations of another kind – of the *real* status of “non-native” Englishes (in the traditional sense) – are furnished by the facts concerning international proficiency examinations, already mentioned above. The first revealing fact is that even highly competent African teachers of English generally have to sit for tests like the TOEFL, a clear indication that the English of an African or Asian, even if they are an English teacher, is deemed to be of doubtful quality. The second, more important, fact is that most, if not all, of the material tested often is British or American, and those tested are judged in terms of native English standards. For example, in the *First Certificate in English Instructions to Oral Examiners* (Cambridge Examinations, Certificates and Diplomas, 1996: 8-9), the highest level of attainment in “Prosodic Features” is the “near-native speaker use of word-stress, rhythm, stress-timing, intonation, pitch-range, and linking of phrases” (p. 8). In “Pronunciation: Individual sounds”, the second highest level is the one where “most individual sounds are close to those of a native speaker [...]” (p. 9). The expectations in the TOEFL are about the same.

In fact, in examination situations, as well as in other social situations, little concession is made to the English of speakers from the Outer and Expanding Circles. As problems of intelligibility often arise in international communication across Circles, the non-native speaker always takes the blame for miscommunication, and is alone required to accommodate the speech of the native speaker. As Kubota (2001: 47) aptly remarks, “the Inner Circle native speakers rarely receive training to develop the awareness and communicative skills needed for interacting with speakers of Englishes that are different from their own variety”.

The consequences of the above discrimination would be lessened if it were acknowledged that the speakers on whom the present paper is centred are also *native* speakers of English or French, though in a different way, and speak a different *native* English or French.

The implications of the emergence of Pidgin English as a mother tongue in a country like Cameroon include a theoretical issue, that of the distinction between pidgins and Creoles. The classic distinction between a pidgin and a Creole is that, unlike a Creole, “a *pidgin* is a language with no native speakers: it is no one’s first language but is a *contact* language” (Wardhaugh, 2002: 60; echoed by Jenkins, 2003: 10). It is on the basis of this distinction that the pidginised/creolised English-based idioms used in Cameroon, Nigeria and Ghana are called Pidgin English, while those spoken in Sierra Leone and Gambia are called Krio or Creole. The growing number of native speakers of Pidgin English in Cameroon warrants a re-labelling of this idiom as a Creole.

Conclusion

In Cameroonian urban centres, French, English and Pidgin English have taken over the mother tongue status and functions of indigenous languages. This phenomenon is a reality, whichever definition of *mother tongue* we decide to go by (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981: 13) – whether the one based on sociology, on

sociolinguistics and psychology or on popular conceptions. To parallel the expression *New Englishes*, and to distinguish the emerging mother tongues from the traditional African and older European mother tongues, they have been called *new mother tongues*. Some sociolinguistic, political, historical and social factors make Cameroon a particularly fertile ground for the spread of these *new* mother tongues, whose exponential spread in the future can be predicted from the rapidity of the phenomenon from the older generation to the present young generation. It is undoubtedly of interest to policy makers, scholars in applied linguistics, teachers of English and French, textbook designers and other language professionals, who should incorporate the issues and concerns that have been raised here in their work agendas.

Note

Some of the findings for this paper appear in the author's earlier writings, the latest being "Some challenges in language planning for Cameroon", a paper presented at the Workshop on Language Planning and Development in Africa, Eldoret, Kenya, 30th May – 3rd June 2005.

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Observing trilingual language acquisition in two pre-school children

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The formal recognition of linguistic rights, important as it is, does not guarantee a language's transmission to new generations. Ultimately, this transmission depends on the speakers and their use of a language in the primary domains (Dirven & Polzenhagen in Rationalist or romantic model in language policy and globalisation, 2004).

Introduction

Multilingualism is used as a blanket term to refer to situations where two or more linguistic varieties are in contact. Such varieties could be discrete languages or different dialects of the same language (Hoffmann & Ytsma, 2004: 1), such as Standard German and one of the Swiss German dialects. In many parts of the world, multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception. Spolsky (1998: 51) claims that monolingual speech communities are rare and monolingual countries even rarer. Baker (2000: 72) reiterates that, in many African and Asian language communities, a monolingual and monocultural person is the exception, and that, in many countries, “linguistic diversity within society and within an individual is accepted as natural, normal and desirable”. In South Africa, for example, a child might have a father who speaks one African language (such as isiXhosa), a mother who speaks another African language (such as Setswana), while the dominant school language might be a third African language (such as isiZulu). In addition, the child will learn English as a Language of Wider Communication (LWC) and language of instruction at school. The child might use all four languages to various degrees and in various situations, thereby coming to view the multilingual situation as normal.

Multilingualism does not mean that all speakers who live in multilingual environments are equally proficient in all their languages. Speakers acquire proficiency in languages according to the actual patterns and requirements of language use: one language might be used only within the family, another at work or school, and a third for socialising in the local community. Some writers (e.g. Hoffmann & Ytsma, 2004: 18, 25) further distinguish between “multilinguality” and “multilingualism”: they see multilinguality as a notion more connected to personality, intrapersonal dynamics, attitudes, social ties, etc., whereas multilingualism refers to the process and result of third or subsequent language acquisition. For the purpose of this article, I choose not to make this distinction, but to use the terms “trilingualism” or “multilingualism” to include the more personal aspects mentioned as well; in other words, to refer to societal and individual multilingualism. Trilingualism studies, as opposed to bilingualism

studies, have only recently been accorded special status (e.g. Hoffmann & Ytsma, 2004). In 1998, Cenoz and Genessee explicitly went beyond bilingualism to multilingualism and increased research efforts that distinguish third language acquisition from second language acquisition (e.g. Cenoz *et al.*, 2001) have followed.

In the “modern nomads” – families that move around the world, often as a result of employment by multinational companies – encouraging trilingualism in the family is becoming more accepted as a possible way of dealing with various languages in the environment. There are different routes to such trilingualism. According to Baker (2001: 100), early trilingualism – when a child is exposed to three languages from birth or early on in childhood – is rarer than trilingualism achieved through schooling, for example when two languages are learnt at school, such as is the case with Catalan, Spanish and English in the Basque country of Spain. Another route to trilingualism is when two languages are acquired in the home and a third at school or in the local community (e.g. Dewaele, 2000; Hoffmann, 1985). This is also the route to trilingualism in our family, where two languages are spoken at home and another is used as a LWC outside.

Another motivation behind our decision to raise our children in a multilingual home and school environment was the indication that there are positive links between multilingualism and cognitive functioning. There is a growing body of research (e.g. Ben-Zeev, 1997; Craik & Bialystok, 2005; Galambos & Hakuta, 1988; Laurén, 1991;) into the effects of bilingualism and multilingualism on the acquisition of further languages, and on cognition in general. Cenoz and Genessee (1998: 20) conclude, in a review of research on trilingualism, that “bilingualism does not hinder the acquisition of an additional language and, to the contrary, in most cases bilingualism favors the acquisition of a third language”. Part of the explanation for this positive effect might be the cognitive advantages of multilingualism, such as cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness, as well as the “development of enhanced linguistic processing strategies” in bilinguals (Baker, 2001: 100). Baker (2001: 160) lists particular rewards, such as advantages in thinking styles, particularly in divergent thinking, creativity, early metalinguistic awareness and communicative sensitivity.

The social benefits of multilingualism are even more compelling: when a person can use more than one language, he/she has many more opportunities to interact with members of other language communities and to practise and refine social skills, as well as more opportunities to learn and gain from different cultures and literatures. Multilingualism is perceived of as enriching and expanding one’s linguistic repertoire (Zentella, 1997).

Socio-cultural and linguistic context

Our family has been provided with a wealth of interesting linguistic experiences as a result of transfers within a multinational company. Six-and-a-half years ago we moved from South Africa to the north of England, and then to Switzerland three years later. Having two baby daughters during this period meant being

faced with many linguistic choices and exciting, often complex linguistic challenges. Some of these challenges are maintaining the first languages of my husband (English) and myself (Afrikaans) and using both these languages in raising our two daughters, Megan (now aged 5;1) (five years and one month) and Amy (aged 3;1). As we live in Basel in the north-western part of Switzerland, where the local spoken language is Swiss German, we are also in daily contact with the local dialect(s).

As I have always felt that I have benefited from being able to speak more than one language fluently (Afrikaans, English, German), we make an effort to try to understand the local dialect and encourage the children to acquire it too. There are many regional dialects of Swiss German. The varieties are non-standardised and seldom written, except during festivities like the annual carnival (“Fasnacht”), when the Baslers proudly parade their dialect in satirical verses and comedies. Young Swiss apparently also use the dialect increasingly in informal written contexts, such as SMS and e-mail. Swiss German differs systematically from Standard German in grammar and pronunciation. There are many lexical differences too, with French words often used instead of Standard German ones, for example “Velo” rather than “Fahrrad” for bicycle, or “Trottoire” rather than “Bürgersteig” for pavement. There is a standard Swiss German variety (“Schweizerhochdeutsch”) that is used for news broadcasts and in education.

In Switzerland, children start kindergarten when they are between four and five-and-a-half years of age, with instruction in the local Swiss German dialect. When they start school two years later, the medium of instruction changes to the standard variety, Swiss High German. This change leads to bi-dialectism for Swiss German children and the addition of yet another code/variety for children such as ours. At school, children learn another two foreign languages, in our region usually French and later English, but they start with these around the ages of ten and thirteen.

Though I could understand hardly a word of Swiss German when we moved to Switzerland, I can now comprehend conversations, radio and television (bar certain dialects) reasonably well and can begin to appreciate some of the cultural festivals with their publications and shows in dialect. I have also learnt to understand the local language well enough for practical and social purposes. So far, my only guinea pigs for practising speaking in Swiss German are small children! My husband is bilingual, with English as his first and Afrikaans his second language, in which he is fluent. Since we moved to Switzerland, he has learnt Standard German (High German or “Hochdeutsch”), with his receptive skills at intermediate level. His understanding of Swiss German is limited.

Statement of the problem

Being multilingual allows one to participate in a variety of encounters with other multilinguals. Some of the languages might be shared by the interlocutors, others not. This situation is conducive to language mixing or “code-switching”, a phenomenon that might be viewed negatively by monolinguals, who could see it

as a lack of mastery of the languages, or mere “sloppy” language use. While collecting the data for this research, I became interested in determining whether the code-switching exhibited by my children was purposeful or random. What were the rules that they applied to their decisions about which language to use or when to import words or expressions from another language? In the discussion of their language use and acquisition, these and related questions will be addressed.

Outline of the study and data collection

As an applied linguist and believer in the wealth of benefits of multilingualism for the individual, and as a parent who is constantly fascinated by our children’s language acquisition, I have always been interested in writing down some of my observations of their language development. Within the practical constraints of my position as mother of two lively toddlers, I have collected data by making notes about the language acquisition of our daughters from the time when they said their first words. When she first saw me scribbling down some notes, Amy, aged 1;10 (one year and ten months), asked in a puzzled way, “Wat skryf jy, Mamma? Wat maak jy?” (What are you writing, Mommy? What are you doing?) These notes, together with sporadic discussions with the Swiss German childminder who looks after them one day a week, form the basis of my observations.

While the aim of this article is to give a brief description of Megan and Amy’s trilingual language development thus far, I – as an applied linguist – am well aware of the limitations of this kind of research, which falls within the paradigm of qualitative research. Hoffmann (1985: 481) remarks on the fact that there is “ample room for over-generalisation, error and bias” when observing one’s own children, but also that there are advantages, such as familiarity with the situation, background and context. Some of the central assumptions of qualitative research traditions (which include case studies like this one) are that they are naturalistic, descriptive, interpretive and are conducted from emic (insider’s) perspectives. In this study I assume the precarious role of participant observer, while being aware of my subjective involvement as mother, and of the need to be reflectively aware of my own frames of interpretation and of our social and linguistic situation. Such awareness of the subjective involvement of the researcher in a study addresses the “neglect of subjectivity” in contemporary studies in the social sciences, both in the sense of a failure to account for the role of the person in such analysis, and in the sense that the methods used seldom give adequate consideration to issues deriving from the subjectivity of the researcher in research methods (cf. Goodson & Walker, 1995: 184; Paola, 1999: 34). This case study, here defined as “an account that gives detailed information about a person, group or thing and their development over a period of time” (Sinclair, 1990) intends to make the role of the researcher and the social context of the research explicit.

Pattern of language contact

Megan was born in 2001 in Leeds, England. We lived there until she was four months old, when we moved to Canton Basel Land, in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Amy was born in 2003 in Basel. Significantly, both children were exposed to all three languages (Afrikaans, English, Swiss German) before the babbling stage in babyhood, which starts at around six to seven months of age. We used the “one language-one parent” approach (cf. Baker, 2000: 46) with them from the start, with their father speaking English and me speaking Afrikaans to them. When we have English-speaking visitors, I sometimes repeat an utterance in English, for the benefit of the visitors; if I don’t, Megan often translates my Afrikaans into English for her friends! I sing and read to them in English as well as in Afrikaans, whereas my husband uses only English. Both Megan and Amy resist when I read to them in German, probably because they are aware that German is only used outside the home. My husband and I speak English to each other, which makes English the dominant home language.

Megan has been going to a Swiss German childminder one or two days a week since she was 14 months of age, when I took up part-time work as an English teacher. At age 3;10, she started attending a local Swiss German playgroup one morning a week; Amy joined Megan there when she was 2;6. Amy had earlier and more intensive regular exposure to the dialect of the same childminder, as she started going there one day a week when she was five months old. The childminder is a retired pre-school and remedial teacher who has spoken her Swiss German dialect (“Berndtytsch”) to them from the start. Her husband, who sometimes is also at home when the children are there, speaks his Basel Land dialect of Swiss German to the children. Though the dialects are very similar, there are grammatical, lexical and phonological differences between them. When we converse, they speak dialect to me, but I speak Standard German, which the Swiss refer to as “Schriftdeutsch” (written German), to them. This use of different language varieties also typifies conversations with the neighbours and other local people.

Our children’s early exposure to three languages puts them in the category of “infant trilinguals” (rather than “child trilinguals”), as they were exposed to all three languages before one of these had been established as a first language, usually around age three (cf. McLaughlin, 1978). From birth, the children have regularly been in social situations in which English, Afrikaans, Swiss German or Standard/High German is used. They hear me code-switch between English, Afrikaans and Standard German, as the situation requires.

We attempt to provide a rich language environment in English and Afrikaans at home by making available opportunities for the use and enjoyment of the languages through reading, singing, listening to CDs, watching videos and television, visiting friends and participating in activities in these languages. This has proved easy in the case of English, as it is possible to get hold of materials in the language quite easily; there are many children’s activities in English within the expatriate community; and we receive satellite television broadcasts from the UK. In the case of Afrikaans it has been more difficult, and the balance sways

heavily towards English in the provision of books, television and activities. This imbalance is evident in Megan's larger English vocabulary in certain fields, such as the narration of stories and the singing of nursery rhymes. The children benefit greatly from our annual visits to South Africa, with development in both languages evident after this yearly period of extended contact. Megan has been to South Africa seven times, and Amy four times.

Megan resists the use of German by us in the home, insisting that books (also those printed in German) be read to her in English or Afrikaans. At this stage, the children hardly watch any television in German, but occasionally listen to songs in the language. They both attend some organised activities in Swiss German, in which they participate well.

Outline of the sequence and pattern of language acquisition

The language development of both children displayed stages of initial mainly monolingual Afrikaans language use, which were soon followed by bilingual use up to the pre-school stage. Megan's two-word stage lasted for about nine months, from the age of 1;9 to 2;6. Amy had a much shorter two-word stage, from the age of 1;4 to 1;8, with short sentences being produced from then onwards. Swiss German was acquired during these stages by both of them, but their productive use of this language was slower than their receptive use (understanding), as is mostly the case when a new language is acquired. Full trilingualism will hopefully be reached at school age.

Megan

Megan's first words were in Afrikaans and appeared at around one year of age, with five words even earlier. At around 1;4 she had a productive vocabulary of at least forty words, of which only two were English and one Swiss German. The first two-word utterances also occurred at this time. At around seventeen months, she gradually started using more English and Swiss German words to describe daily routine actions or objects, in addition to the Afrikaans ones she knew already, such as "aesse" (eat), "nei" (no), or English "tummy" and "boots", when speaking to an English or Swiss person. Interestingly, the first Swiss German word spoken by both the children was "nei", said long before they used "nee" or "no", and it was used in all situations, whereas other Swiss German words were used mainly with the childminder! At 1;6, Megan started singing parts of nursery rhymes and songs in English and Afrikaans.

At this age, she could say "salut" or "hallo" with a distinct German accent when greeting the neighbours, and varied her goodbyes according to the situation and its participants, saying either "ta-ta" (Afrikaans), "bye" or "night" in English, and "adieu" or "tschuess" to speakers of Swiss German. This code-switching behaviour reveals early awareness of the necessity to communicate in different languages with different people. Before the age of two it was clear that she could understand English and Afrikaans very well, as well as basic requests and information in Swiss German, even though she produced far fewer German utterances than

English or Afrikaans ones. As her sister was born when Megan was two years old and I had my hands full looking after the two of them, my notes on her language development became more sporadic for about six months.

Megan produced her first sentences in English and Afrikaans around age 2;6, but still used mostly two-word utterances in Swiss German at the time. English was her default language at this age – she addressed strangers, including children on the playground, in English. After Amy's birth I took up part-time work again when Megan was 2;5, and she started attending an English-speaking daycare centre one and a half days per week. This change had a tremendous influence on her language development. Within two months her English had become markedly stronger and her vocabulary much larger; another four months later, her play language shifted from Afrikaans to English when she was engaged in solitary play. It was at this age that she started code-switching more frequently, especially borrowing English words when she spoke Afrikaans.

Trilingual children can act as interpreters or “language brokers” (Baker, 2001: 104) within their families, another example of purposeful code-switching. Aged only 2;6, when Megan could not yet produce many utterances in Swiss German, she surprised me by anxiously translating an important message from Swiss German into Afrikaans when she considered the content crucial: at the steep entrance to our parking garage, a man warned me sternly that if I would attempt to drive down the icy ramp, our car would crash into the opposite wall and that I had to wait for the ice to melt. She told me worriedly what he had said and repeated it again, just to be sure that I understood well how serious the matter was! At 3;9, she could translate Swiss German announcements on the tram for her father, who does not understand the local dialect well. From age 3;6, it also became clear to me that she understood conversations that I had with people in Standard German, as she later repeated or referred to topics raised in such conversations. Those conversations are currently the only exposure she has had to this variety of the language. I have heard her use a Standard German construction rather than the Swiss German one on a few occasions, for example at age 4;2 “Willst du mit uns go spiele?” rather than the Swiss “Wotsch mit uns go spiele?” At age 5, the Standard German spoken by the children of friends who visited us did not have a negative influence on her eagerness to communicate: within hours of their arrival, she had made sense of some German expressions such as “Guck mal hier!” (Look here!) and was using them in her interactions with the visitors.

After the age of 2;6, Megan gradually started using more Swiss German in her conversations with the childminder. Words relating to everyday experiences and objects, such as “mini” (mine), “no mehr” (more), “Wasser” (water), “Stiefeli” (boots) and “Hut” (hat) were used frequently at the time. She attempted simple sentences too, frequently including English or Afrikaans words, which were often not understood by the childminder and led to frustration for the little girl, who would persevere until she was understood. In some ways her use of Swiss German remains a bit of a mystery to me, as I mostly do not have access to her Swiss German world but have to rely on the childminder's or play group leader's observations, as well as my eavesdropping on her conversations, of course.

Megan has attended a local Swiss German playgroup one morning a week from age 3;10. This event led to a marked increase in her use of the language; she frequently reveals a bit of this world to me following playgroup sessions, by singing a song or relating some events. Following playgroup, she initiated role play with me in Swiss German on several occasions, and I decided to accept her invitation rather than insist on speaking only Afrikaans to her, as I usually do. Aged 3;10, she seemingly practised giving instructions such as “chomm abbe” (come down), “uffe chlaettere” (climb up) and “chomm mit” (come along) while playing, but also used longer stretches of Swiss German: “Luegemol das Bild. Es ist Schwarz. Wie dini Hose, Mamma, und dini Jacke, und dini Schuhe.” (Look at that picture. It is black. Like your pants, Mommy, and your jacket, and your shoes.) “Helfe mir hier uffestiege” (Help me climb up here) revealed that she had acquired some of the dative case system in German. Directly following this role play she launched into an English role play, including her sister and me. From age 3;10, I have frequently heard her use full sentences when speaking to the childminder, for example “Kann ik das mitnaeh?” (Can I take this with me?) or “Kann ik Gummibaerli ha?” (Can I have some jelly babies?). When addressed in Swiss German at age 4;6, she responded appropriately with short answers or actions, such as saying what her name is or how old she is. By age 5, she has acquired much more Swiss German, and can converse with relative ease with children and adults, switching codes when she needs to. She can narrate events, express demands and requests, as well as understand and enjoy children’s theatre and a puppet show.

By age four, Megan had acquired the grammars of English and Afrikaans and could use the languages quite accurately, including verb conjugations. There are some persistent “mistakes”, though, such as frequently forming the simple past tense with the verb “did” plus the infinitive (e.g. at age 3;9 “We did bake some cake while Amy was sleeping.”). At other times she would form the irregular past tense verb according to the regular verb rules, for example “This thing broke” – a typical acquisition form in English mother tongue speakers. From age 4;2, she has gradually been using the irregular verbs too, sometimes correcting herself by repeating a sentence with the correct verb form. She often does not invert the word order in subordinate clauses in Afrikaans, e.g. at age 4;3 “Die klein hansworse, wat ek het gesien, het die ander groot hanswors se kos gesteel!” (The small clowns that I saw stole the big clown’s food.)

It has been interesting to observe Megan’s phonological idiosyncrasies. She has an interesting English accent – mainly South African, but with some British and American influence, especially in her American pronunciation of “r” and the “t” in words such as “glitter” (age 2;9). When speaking Afrikaans, she used to pronounce the voiceless, velar fricative [x̥] as [k], but around age 3 she became aware of it and self-corrected. In Swiss German, she pronounces the sound correctly, for example in “chlaettere” (climb), except in the case of German “ich” [ix̥] (I), which she pronounces [ik], maybe as a result of phonological transfer from Afrikaans “ek”. Like many monolingual Afrikaans-speaking children, Megan lisped and also mispronounced [r] when speaking Afrikaans. She used to replace the Afrikaans alveolar trill [r̥] with the lateral [l] in all cases, but at age 3;11 she started

replacing the [r] with the English alveolar approximant “K” in word-final positions, e.g. “beter” (better). Some Swiss Germans use a uvular trill [R], whereas others use the alveolar trill [r]. Because of her Afrikaans background or possibly because her childminder uses the alveolar [r], Megan has chosen to use mainly the alveolar [r] when she speaks Swiss German, though I have heard her use the uvular trill [R] on a few occasions, especially when she tries to self-correct her pronunciation. By age 5, she has acquired the correct pronunciation of [r] in Afrikaans, while frequently self-correcting (or attempting to correct) her lisp. She also regularly corrects Amy’s pronunciation of [r] and [s].

Amy

Amy’s first words appeared when she was about one year of age, with at least three words recorded around ten months of age. Especially “eina” (Afrikaans for “ouch”) was used to great effect when she fell over! At thirteen months, she could say several more words, mostly in Afrikaans, while also extending her repertoire of first names, of which the first was her sister’s name. She acquired new words in English and Afrikaans at a steady pace, but I unfortunately did not keep an exact word count at that stage. At age 1;2 she startled us by saying her first word in Swiss German, “luegemol” (look!). This was followed at age 1;3 by greeting words such as “Adieu mitenand” (Good-bye everyone) and “Ciao” and the names of other favourite objects, such as “Chetti” (beads), “Gipfeli” (croissant), “Schoggi, danke schoen!” (Chocolate, thanks!) and “Chloegger” (marbles) at age 1;4. Her Swiss German vocabulary increased more rapidly at an earlier age than did Megan’s. The childminder also remarked frequently that her accent and intonation were perfect; this development could be because Amy had had more direct exposure to the language from an even younger age, as she had been going to our Swiss childminder once a week since she was five months old. From the age of 1;3, she had also been exposed to some organised activities in Swiss German and in English, where she further expanded her repertoire.

She started singing at age 1;4, favouring English nursery rhymes that she heard often, such as “See-saw, Marjorie Daw”. By age 2, she could sing many nursery rhymes and songs fluently, mostly in English. At 1;6, Amy sometimes changed existing words by analogy to form new ones. Having acquired “stukkend” (broken) in Afrikaans, she added the [t] sound to the same concept in English, as well as to some Afrikaans words, and made “brokent”, and later “reent” (rain), possibly generalising the word-final [t] to follow [n]. Like her sister Megan at age 3, she lisped and also pronounced the Afrikaans alveolar trill [r] as [l]. By age 2;1, however, she had incorporated the English alveolar approximant [K] into her Afrikaans language use in most word-initial and word-final positions of the sound, for example in “resiesmotor” (racing car) and “suiker” (sugar), but not in “kal” (target: “kar” - car) or “gloot” (target “groot”), where she continued using the lateral [l] instead of [r]. By age 3, she had self-corrected her pronunciation of the Afrikaans alveolar trill [r] in all word positions.

Amy had a brief two-word stage in her English and Afrikaans language acquisition, forming short sentences from age 1;6, for example “Ek weet nie” (I

don't know) and "Here comes me!" as she climbed up the stairs. Sometimes simultaneous acquisition of concepts in all three languages was evident, for example at age 1;9 she could get excited in three languages when she managed to do something: either "Ek het dit!", "I did it!" or "Voila!" was said, with the code-switching depending on who the interlocutor was. Aged 1;10, her English and Afrikaans sentences were getting longer and more complicated, for example "Die son skyn in my ogies. Ek het nie 'n sonbril aan nie". (The sun is shining in my eyes. I'm not wearing sunglasses.). By now, Amy clearly had a good receptive knowledge of her three languages. In addition, she clearly understood my High German too, as was evident from her perfect translation of one of my questions:

Me (to a little boy): Fabricio, warum bist du heute so traurig? (Fabricio, why are you so sad today?)

Amy (to me): Hoekom is die seuntjie vandag so hartseer? (Why is the little boy so sad today?)

At age 1;11, she often translated her own utterances for the other parent: while pulling the phone off the bedside table, she said "Die telefoon het afgeval, Mamma.", then, turning to her dad, said "Telephone fall down", immediately correcting herself by saying "Telephone fell down". She always addresses people in the appropriate language, code-switching skilfully; only once (at 1;10) she addressed me in English when inviting me to join her and Megan in dancing by saying "Come, let's jive, Mamma". At this age, her utterances in Swiss German were also getting longer and more complex, for example "No me Ruebli ha" (Want more carrots) and "No nid muedi, nei Bett" (Not yet tired, no bed), said to the childminder. By age 2;2, she could relate a simple sequence of events in Swiss German, for example "Pingu hat's Puppewaegeli kaputt gmacht". (Pingu broke the doll's buggy.). She could also make requests such as "Wotsch Sandale alege?" (Do you want to put sandals on?) and "I will no me Smarties ha" (I want more Smarties).

At age 1;10, Amy was clearly coming to grips with the acquisition of the frequently used diminutive form in Afrikaans by using the diminutive with several nouns in one utterance, for example "Ek wil die klein babatjie teddiebeertjie hê" (I want the small little baby teddy bear). The diminutive form is sometimes extended to verbs, as can be done in Afrikaans, especially in conversations with small children, for example, "Megan slapies nog" (Megan is still sleeping). She also sometimes referred to herself in the third person and in the diminutive form at this age, saying "Klein babadogtertjie wil pen hê" (Little baby girl wants pen). At age 1;11 there was evidence that she was acquiring the Afrikaans double negative, which she would sometimes make a "triple negative", for example, when playing with her dolls, "Ek kan nie hy broekie nie uittrek nie" (I can't take his pants off). This utterance also shows confusion of the Afrikaans pronoun "hy" and the possessive pronoun "sy". Her use of the negative form in Afrikaans is sometimes characterised by word order "mistakes", e.g. "Ek wil pappies nie hê nie!" (I don't want porridge.) and "Ek hou van nie pynappel nie" (I don't like pineapple).

By the age of two years, Amy had become a fluent speaker of Afrikaans and English, adding her idiosyncratic flavour to the languages as she moved through various acquisition stages. She mostly used full sentences, and occasionally a two- or three-word sentence. At this age she was acquiring the Afrikaans plural forms, sometimes adding more than one plural marker to the same word, for example “kouses” (socks), “skoenes” (shoes), “tulpes” (tulips) and even “twees” (twos). She was also coming to grips with possessive pronouns in both English and Afrikaans: in English she sometimes formed them with apostrophes, thereby indicating possession twice, for example “That’s yours’s, Dad, and this is mine’s”. In Afrikaans, she added an “s” to Afrikaans possessive pronouns, maybe in analogy to “yours”, for example “Dit is mynes, en dit is jounes” (This is mine, and this is yours). In Swiss German she could use the pronouns “mini” (mine) and “dini” (yours) from age 1;8. At age 3, Amy uses a wide range of vocabulary in English and Afrikaans, with few ungrammatical forms. She sometimes forms the past tense with “did + infinitive”, or applies the rules for regular past tense verbs to the irregular ones, e.g. “He slided down the stairs” (3;1).

She tends to acquire and use exclamations and forms of address easily: having watched part of “Alice in Wonderland” just once, at age 2, she made me laugh by saying “Yes, your majesty!” when I told her to do something! Such expressions include polite phrases such as “You’re welcome”, which she uses to respond to thanks in English and Afrikaans, and responses in Swiss German such as “Gang nume!”, which means something like “That’s okay with me – you can go!”. She is very aware of her own identity; when called by a pet name at age 1;11, she exclaimed “Ek’s nie ‘n liefie-diefie nie, ek’s Amy” (I’m not a lovey-dovey, I’m Amy!). This awareness of identity seemed to precede her ability to understand, participate in and initiate role plays with her sister and me. Such role plays are initiated and conducted in Afrikaans with me; for example, at age 2, “Ek’s die mamma, jy’s die baba” and similarly in English with her sister “I’m the baby, you’re the mommy, and I’m crying!”.

At age 3, Amy is creative in her use of words, for example “We’re dress-upping” and “Die son kom uiter en uiter” (The sun is coming outer and outer.) She frequently coins new words, especially in Afrikaans, for example “opmoubroekie” (“up-sleeved” pants) or “kortmoubroekie” (“short-sleeved” pants) for a pair of shorts. She amuses the neighbours and us endlessly with her knack for picking up long and funny words in Swiss German, such as “Schnotternase” (snotty nose) (at age 1;8)! In the next section, we shall have a closer look at code-switching and language transfer in the girls’ language use.

Code-switching and language transfer

The term “language interference” has been used to describe the mixing of languages when several languages are acquired. With Sharwood-Smith (1989), I prefer the terms “transfer” or “cross-linguistic influence”, because code-switching in multilinguals could be a way of conveying thoughts and ideas in a personally more efficient matter. Indeed, code-switching varies according to the topic of the conversation, the participants, and the context, as well as factors such as language

proficiency, content, degree of formality, attitudes to language mixing, etc. Some researchers (such as Olshtian & Nissim-Amitai, 2004: 45) use another term, “code-mixing”, to refer to “the incorporation of ‘guest expressions’ within the ‘host’ language that happens to be used for the communicative event”, i.e. code-switching at word level. They use the term code-switching for “switching from one language to another for utterances that contain at least one clause”: the code-switching occurs at sentence level. For the purpose of this article, this distinction is unnecessary. As Eastman (1992: 1) suggests, “efforts to distinguish code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing are doomed”. In the language use of bilinguals, one could distinguish between a “monolingual mode”, when bilinguals use one of their languages with monolingual speakers of one of their languages, and a “bilingual mode” when they are in the company of other bilinguals and have the option of switching languages.

Baker (2000: 102-4) discusses some aims and purposes of code-switching, especially in relation to adult language use. In the problem statement in this article, I stated that I aimed to examine the code-switching behaviour exhibited by our children to determine if it was random or purposeful. The linguistic data collected as part of this research and the following discussion shall explicate my conclusion that code-switching is a purposeful and valuable linguistic and social tool in the language use of these pre-school children.

At age 4;2, Megan exhibited frequent language transfer, especially from English to Afrikaans. She seldom showed signs of transfer from Afrikaans when she spoke English, though she sometimes imported words, for example when she explained to a little American girl how to operate a game at the zoo: “See, you put the coin in the elephant’s ‘slurp’ (target: trunk) here, and then it rolls down whirly whirly till it drops in the hole at the bottom”, or “Daddy we did see some ‘robs’ (target: seals) at the zoo” (3;10). She makes delightful new English words by translating from Afrikaans into English, for example at age 3;6, “play-play” after Afrikaans “speel-speel” (meaning ‘pretend’). She frequently imports words from English when she speaks Afrikaans, sometimes anglicising a word: “Kyk Mamma, ek hardloop agterwards (target: agtertoe)” (3;11) (Look Mommy, I’m running backwards). One word in which she combined English (umbrella) and Afrikaans (sambreel), is “sambrella”; she used this form persistently from around age 2 until just before her 4th birthday. Amy acquired this form from Megan; at age 5;1, Megan corrects Amy’s (3;1) utterance “Nee, Amy, jy moet sê ‘sambreel’, nie ‘sambrella’ nie”. (No, Amy, you must say “umbrella”, not “sambrella”).

Megan’s word order in Afrikaans sometimes follows an English pattern; she often does not invert the word order in Afrikaans when it differs from English, for example (at 3;11) “Daar vlieg die borrel wat ek het geblaas” (target: “wat ek geblaas het” – There goes the bubble that I blew). She also translates expressions from English directly into Afrikaans, for example at age 4, “Ek het skrik gekry van die bye”, after “The bees gave me a fright”. There are many examples of utterances in which she applies the Afrikaans past tense indicator “ge-” to English verbs. In the following example, when she was 4;4, her word order and sentence structure also showed clear signs of transfer from English: “Ek het amper af die trappies getumble” (I almost down the steps tumbled).

Occasionally, she translates an English word directly into Afrikaans and uses that instead of the correct Afrikaans one, for example “Mamma, ons moet beter nou gaan, anders is ons laat by die swembad” (Mommy, we better go now, else we’ll be late at the pool, in which she translated “better” into Afrikaans “beter”, instead of the irregular comparative form “liewer”). In rare cases, the children simply seem to prefer the English word for something to the Afrikaans one, even though they understand the Afrikaans word or might sometimes even use it, for example English “boots” rather than Afrikaans “stewels” (Megan, 2;8), and “noise” rather than “lawaaï” (3;9). There are also instances where she uses the English and Afrikaans word for a concept in one utterance, for example “noise” and “geluid” at age 3;10: “Mamma, as jy weer daai noise hoor, moet jy vir my vra ‘Wat’s daai geluid?’” (Mommy, when you hear that noise again, you must ask me “What’s that noise?”).

When speaking Swiss German, Megan makes the best use of her other two languages to ensure that she is understood. She imports words from both English and Afrikaans, and also “germanises” words from these languages as needed, for example at age 4;3, “Uns goehn uusse” (We’re going out) after Afrikaans “Ons gaan uit” instead of the dialect form “Wir goehn uusse”. In rare cases, where a word is used as a name for an object, Megan prefers a Swiss German word to English or Afrikaans, for example “Spielgruppe” rather than “play group” or “speelgroep”. There are instances where Megan would use both the English or Afrikaans word and the Swiss German word for something, but the cognate would have a slightly different referent. From 3;6, Megan has used “water” in English or Afrikaans to refer to tap or still mineral water, whereas “Wasser” is used to refer to sparkling mineral water. Similarly, “Haferfloeckli” is used to refer to raw oat flakes, whereas “oats” or “hawermout” refers to oatmeal porridge. This word is also part of one of her rare but persisting trilingual utterances (3;6): “Ek wil Haferfloeckli met sugar hê!” There are cases in which the whole family has adopted a Swiss German word rather than the English or Afrikaans one, for example “Gipfeli” rather than “croissant”, and “Schoggi” rather than “chocolate”. In many ways, it used to be difficult to obtain reliable data about the children’s use of Swiss German because they were often reluctant to use it in our presence, using it only in conversation with speakers of the dialect. By age 5, Megan has shed her former shyness and now rather enjoys showing off her command of the language when the opportunity arises.

For me, the most interesting phenomenon in the code-switching of both Megan and Amy is how they separate play from reality by switching from Afrikaans to English. Megan started using English increasingly frequently as a play language shortly after she started going to an English daycare centre for one and a half days a week at the age of 2;6. English is the language she uses in role plays with her dolls and her sister. Amy seems to accept this code-switching as normal and also uses English when she role-plays with Megan. When conversing with one another only, though, the children used to speak Afrikaans only. But since the ages of 4;8 (Megan) and 2;9 (Amy), there seems to have been a gradual shift towards increased use of English in their conversation when they are not playing; Afrikaans is still used mostly when discussing routines, food and other everyday

matters, and when arguing with each other! Because of the frequent code-switching between English and Afrikaans, which comes perfectly naturally to them, the older sibling has contributed to her younger sister's language development in both languages.

Like Megan, Amy is a skilled code-switcher, importing words from the other two languages into the code she is using at that moment. The code-switching occurs most frequently between English and Afrikaans, for example at age 2: "Hierdie is my magic wand, en dis my crown" (This is my magic wand and this is my crown.) and "Ek het stippy take vir nodig" (Target "Ek het sticky tape nodig" – I need sticky tape.) Occasionally, she imports a word or two from Swiss German; like Megan, she seems to prefer some dialect words to their English or Afrikaans translations: at age 1;10, for example, "Ek hou van jou chetti, Mamma" (I like your beads, Mommy.), even though she knows the Afrikaans word "krale", or "Ek wil my Gummistiefeli aantrek" (I want to put my rubber boots on), even though she knows both "rubberstewels" and "rubber boots".

At age 2, an utterance such as "Ek is dorst" (I am thirsty), where she adds a "t" to the end of the Afrikaans word "dors", as in the similar German word "durst", shows language transfer from Swiss German to Afrikaans. "Kan ek sap ha?" (Swiss German "ha" instead of Afrikaans "hê") could show transfer from Swiss German too, or could be transfer from English "Can I have some juice?". In Afrikaans, one would use "kry" instead of "hê" in this request. Similarly, the form used in "Sy nodig 'n doekie" (She needs a nappy) (Amy, 3;0), could be a transfer from English or German ("Sie braucht eine Windel"), as the usual Afrikaans form is "Sy het 'n doekie nodig".

Having looked at some examples of language transfer and code-switching in the children's language use, one can conclude that their code-switching is not random, but fulfils the following purposes (cf. also Baker, 2000: 102-3):

- ☞ Code-switching is used to communicate friendship and the need to be accepted by a peer group. From age 4;10, Megan started addressing me in either Swiss German or English, depending on our current company. This is the case especially when we are with new friends of hers from her Swiss playgroup, or from the English-speaking community. By age 3, Amy has not yet used code-switching for this purpose.
- ☞ Code-switching is used to reinforce a request: "Nee, Mamma, ek wil nie water hê nie, ek wil 'Wasser' hê" (No, Mommy, I don't want water, I want "Wasser" (mineral water)) (Megan, 4;2).
- ☞ The children code-switch to substitute a word they don't know in one language for a word in another language, e.g. "Mamma moet vir ons van daai klein 'cones' met 'schoggi' en 'vanilla' koop" (Mommy must buy us some of those small cones with chocolate and vanilla) (Megan, 4;8) and "Hy 'belong' by sy Mamma-Bear" (He belongs with his Mommy Bear) (Amy, 3;1).
- ☞ Code-switching is used to express a concept that has no equivalent in the other languages, e.g. "Gaan ons by Simone 'Zvieri' eet of by die huis?" (Are we going to have our four o'clock snack at Simone's or at home?) (Megan, 5;1).

- ☞ The children code-switch to emphasise a particular point in a conversation: “Amy, los my sal! Ek sê ‘Leave my lipstick alone!’” (Megan: 5;0). (Amy, leave my lotion alone! I say, leave my lipstick alone!)
- ☞ When speaking to the children, I sometimes code-switch by repeating a word or new concept in English to clarify a point; I have heard Megan do the same when speaking to Amy.
- ☞ Code-switching is sometimes used to relate part of a conversation in the original language: Megan (5;1) said to me, “Simone het gesê ‘You may not play with that special boat’” (Simone said, ‘You may not play with that special boat’).
- ☞ The code that is chosen is governed by the situation or “genre”, such as play or conversation, as is illustrated by the children’s choice of English when playing but Afrikaans when conversing.
- ☞ Names of characters from books or television are not translated, e.g. “Die ‘Fat Controller’ kom in die tonnel” (The Fat Controller belongs in the tunnel) (Amy, 3;1).
- ☞ The language of the interlocutor determines the choice of language, for example when speaking to neighbours or members of the English-speaking community, or other South Africa friends.

Next, we shall look at the children’s awareness of the languages in their lives.

Awareness of the three languages

One of the cognitive benefits of multilingualism is early language awareness. Dewaele (2000) points out that, in the case of Livia, who learnt Dutch from her mother, French from her father and English in the local London neighbourhood, the concept of different languages, as well as awareness of her languages, came before her second birthday. She also understood the value of multilingualism early, for instance repeating requests for something she wanted in another language if she did not immediately get the reaction she wanted.

For Megan, awareness of appropriate language choice was evident as early as 1;6 in her ability to address people in the appropriate language and, later, to translate utterances from one language into another. More explicit awareness of the three language systems came around 3;6, when she started naming the languages, sometimes confusing English and Swiss German. At age 3;10, she would tell me to “speak like Daddy” or to “read like Daddy reads” when she wanted me to speak or read in English. When asked explicitly who in her world speaks which language, she has no problem listing the people who speak “German like Annebeth” (the childminder), “Afrikaans like Mommy” or “English like Daddy”. At 4;2, she knew the names of the languages, but when she became confused, she would ask “Hoe praat ons nou weer Engels/Afrikaans/Duits?” (How do we speak English/Afrikaans/German again?), and is satisfied when I’ve said a sentence in the appropriate language. She also enjoyed playing with words, repeating concepts that she knows in all three languages, for example, at 3;9 “Glace is roomys en ice-cream” and “’n Elevator is ‘n hysbak en is ‘n Lift”. It seems to me as

if this behaviour is a way of reassuring and amusing herself, while also gaining parental praise. When she first showed awareness of the three languages, I started repeating new concepts in all three languages for her, naming the languages. At age 3;11, she clearly enjoyed experimenting with her languages, for example by singing impromptu translations of songs, especially from Afrikaans into English, for example “Almal dra ‘n jas” is sung as “Everyone’s got a jacket”!

Around age three, Megan started showing an interest in reading letters and numbers, and was soon able to recognise an “m” and a 3 as “her letter and her number”. By age four, she could recognise most of the letters of the alphabet, and called them by their corresponding English sounds, for example “m for moon”. She also knew that the letters could represent a different sound in Afrikaans (where “g” is the voiceless velar fricative [x]), and enjoys pointing out such similarities and differences when doing her Afrikaans alphabet puzzle. At age 3;8, she would sing the alphabet song over and over in English while building an alphabet puzzle in order to get the letters in the right order. She could also recognise several of her friends’ first names in writing, even if they started with the same initial letter and were presented in a mixed order. By age five, she had learnt to write letters when prompted with the sounds they represent in English. Her understanding of Afrikaans phonics is more limited than her English phonics, probably because she has had less exposure to learning phonics in Afrikaans. We have playfully introduced her to a bit of High German phonics, but are not currently putting emphasis on learning that.

At age 2;3, Amy could not yet verbalise her awareness of the languages, but she demonstrated awareness by making appropriate language choices, for example by addressing people in the correct language. By age three, she is able to label her three languages and is becoming aware that letters represent sounds. She can write “A” and “X”, while recognising and naming several more letters and numbers. Her default language with children used to be English, but by age three she has learnt to address children she doesn’t know in the language which she hears them use, using Swiss German as the default language.

Conclusion

The general language development pattern of both children is that they acquired English and Afrikaans simultaneously from birth and essentially in the same way as monolingual children do. The third language was added early in their lives, which puts them in the category of infant trilinguals, rather than child trilinguals. Currently, their proficiency is not as high in the third, Swiss German, as in the other two languages, but that is set to change once the children start formal schooling. Megan’s preferred language has changed from Afrikaans as a toddler to English as a pre-schooler. English is also the language in which she displays most lexical variety and sophistication, which she speaks with the highest degree of grammatical accuracy, and with the least evidence of language transfer. Her proficiency is probably comparable to that of many monolingual English children of her age. Amy’s language preference is not clear yet, but I suspect that more contact with English in future might sway her preference towards English too.

(She has been attending an English pre-school with Megan once a week since she turned three.) Code-switching is prevalent in the language use of both children, as part of the normal developmental process and linguistic behaviour of a multilingual child. Their code-switching is purposeful and systematic, and clearly is a valuable linguistic and social tool.

In the future, when the children start kindergarten and school, we would have to ensure that exposure to Afrikaans and English is maintained at a high level, for Swiss German will become their Language of Wider Communication, and Standard German will be the language in which they will be educated. Barron-Hauwaert (2000: 10) mentions a similar “double threat” to language configuration in trilingual families: a minority language might be displaced by the other parent’s language and the local language. Even for myself, maintaining the minority language, Afrikaans, in my own life and language use is not as simple as I thought it would be, with some language shift towards English already having occurred over the past few years. That will probably be the case for the children as well once German and English are established as LWC at school, in the local community and in the predominantly English expatriate community. I will have to be resourceful to keep the Afrikaans language alive in our family against the linguistic pressure of our home language, English, and the local and school languages, Swiss German and Standard German. Regular visits to South Africa and frequently replenishing reading materials in Afrikaans could help ensure that they do not lose the language.

Hoffmann (1985: 493) rightly mentions that social and psychological factors play an important role in the maintenance of multilingualism, especially at times of transition, such as the start of kindergarten or school. At such times, which are crucial to the linguistic, psychological and social development of the child, the home language might become vulnerable. Conscious parental effort and support will be necessary to maintain the home languages and to encourage positive attitudes towards them in the children. Trilingualism is a field in need of more study, and so are the language attitudes within the family and the issue of triculturalism.

Certainly, cultural identity issues will also come to the fore as the children grow older and learn to deal with their own multilingualism, especially since their languages and the culture(s) of their parents will be different from those of their school friends. Language is a salient dimension of cultural identity and plays an important role in intergroup relations when languages and cultures are in contact. Our daughters might come to accept, question and/or reject their individual multilingualism, which might give rise to future cultural alienation or anomie in the children – a feeling of not fully belonging to any of the language or cultural groups. Their perceptions and experiences of language dominance and language status or linguistic capital will influence their language choices and attitudes. If they go to school in Basel they would probably attain native-like proficiency in Swiss German and a high level of literacy in Standard German at school, which should hopefully prevent their being socially marginalised. Their English proficiency will certainly prove beneficial for them both socially and academically.

So far, it seems to me as if the children have benefited from their trilingualism, and that the price they have had to pay for it has been low and certainly worth it. Like Hoffmann's (1985) children, they display some lack of grammatical accuracy and shortcomings in sophistication and stylistic variety. Trilingual children are, however, neither expected to be the sum of three monolinguals, nor to have the linguistic refinement and elegance of a monolingual child in each of the three languages. For their personal growth and wellbeing, we will be satisfied if they would develop at least one of the languages at a higher level of linguistic functioning, such as academic proficiency. We hope that the potentially advantageous aspects of becoming multilingual will enhance their social wellbeing and cognitive growth. Such development would allow them to function optimally as members of the different cultural and linguistic groups to which they belong.

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The dynamics of language policy in Namibia: A view from cognitive sociolinguistics¹

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Even if Namibia sticks to its initial choice, much of the success of the new language policy will depend on the harmonious balance between the use of English and of the other languages, which are the 'real' instruments for self-expression of over ninety percent of Namibians (Dirven in Language, cultural community and nation in Africa, 1991).

Introduction

Research exploring the language policy and planning situation in the state of Namibia is now well documented and has formed the focus of several studies in sociolinguistic research (e.g. Harlech-Jones, 1990; Pütz, 1995a; Trewby & Fitchat, 2001). The aim of this paper is to introduce into the discussion an approach from cognitive sociolinguistics that aims at a cognitive view of social inequality, ideology and attitudes. In this regard, the globalisation of English in the context of marginalised African languages will be discussed from the perspective of the Rationalistic and the Romantic Models in language policy and planning situations (Polzenhagen & Dirven, forthcoming).

Geeraerts (2003a) argues that an extension of cognitive linguistics to sociolinguistics and, we may add, to the sociology of language, is an inevitable part of the cognitive linguistics paradigm. As a dynamic usage-based model, cognitive linguistics is certainly predestined to have an impact on the various facets of ideology and society as such. Thus, this paper is concerned with an analysis of the thought patterns and structures that are reflected in the attitudes and stereotypes, as well as the discourses, of the language policy situation as can be observed in the state of Namibia.

The organisation of this article is as follows. The first part will give a brief sociolinguistic profile of the multilingual situation of Namibia, with a focus on the

¹ This paper represents an attempt to combine my interest in African language policy and planning situations with an account of the newly developing field of cognitive sociolinguistics. In the same vein, René Dirven's academic achievements during the last 15 years have been clearly devoted to studies on language contact, especially in Africa, and cognitive linguistics, which he was instrumental in introducing as a new theory of language to the European continent. I owe much to René's personal kindness and academic expertise and I'm confident that he still has much to contribute 'linguistically' to the academic world for many years to come.

development of educational issues since independence in 1990. The second part discusses the main concepts pertaining to the relatively new study of cognitive sociolinguistics and its impact on the globalisation of English, as well as the fate of minority languages in Africa. In particular, I will discuss the language policy situation in Namibia in the light of two dominant competing models or ideologies: (i) the rationalist model, which focuses on the role of language as an instrument for wider communication (i.e. English), and the (ii) romantic model, where postcolonial English is generally perceived as a threat to the ecolinguistic situation in multi-ethnic and multilingual societies.

Due to the cognitive-linguistic orientation of this paper, the empirical part is concerned with an analysis of the role of metaphor in the production and reproduction of language ideologies. Conceptual metaphor and its underlying metaphorical expressions are considered to be analytical tools in discovering the ideological make-up of the language policy discourse currently prevalent in Namibian society. The general role of metaphor as a window to our worldview and ideology will be investigated by paying particular attention to the *conduit* metaphor as the most outstanding conceptual tool concerning communication and metalinguistic discourse (see also Wee, 2002). An empirical investigation of a variety of texts referring to (i) the Namibian constitution (especially Article 3 – language), (ii) an informal (personal) interview carried out with the former Minister of Education and Culture in Namibia, and (iii) political and educational speeches given by representative members of the Namibian Parliament, will show the ideological power of metaphor and the ways it has been used to justify language policies, beliefs and value systems.

The state of Namibia and its sociolinguistic situation

When I started doing fieldwork in 1990 and 1993 (Pütz, 1995a), the language policy and planning situation in Namibia presented itself as follows: the Constitution of Namibia had just stipulated that the “sole official language in Namibia” should be English. The decision to implement English as sole official language had already been envisaged in the SWAPO key document *Toward a Language Policy for Namibia. English as the Official Language: Perspectives and Strategies* (UNIN, 1981) almost ten years before independence (on March 21, 1990). According to the then Prime Minister, Hage G Geingob, the argument for choosing English as sole medium of communication was based on the fact that the Namibian people had been “restricted in their capacity to communicate with the outside world” for far too long (Geingob, 1995: 176):

Isolation imposed on us, by denying most Namibians education in a global language, seems to have been durable. On Independence, therefore, we had to choose a language that would open up the world to us. English was the obvious choice. After all, English is the most widely spoken language, spoken by some six hundred million people. There is no corner of the globe where you could not get by if you knew English. You could also get by in many countries if you knew French; but we cannot say that about most other languages.

In line with linguistic relativity, Geingob at the same time maintained that “meanings of words are a tool that predispose a speaker to think in a particular manner”, and further remarked that “by words we interpret our environment, we give meaning to reality” (Geingob, 1995: 176). The Prime Minister also made reference to the former language, Afrikaans, which, prior to independence, “served as an instrument of isolation and insularity” and which “ensured that Namibians (were) maintained as a labour force with their communication lines largely restricted to the dominant imposed language”. The ideology of authority and power thus suggests that English in Namibia entailed an image which was intended to evoke positive feelings, such as liberation, wellbeing and social status, while Afrikaans was supposed to evoke an opposite view, namely being the language by which people were oppressed and put to forced labour (to be discussed in greater detail in Section 4.2). As regards the proposition of selecting one or two of the African languages in Namibia, the Government clearly spelled out the short-sightedness, for example, of making Oshiwambo, the most widely spoken language in Namibia, the official language. This, according to the government’s stance, would lead to ethnic tensions and cultural conflict, thereby not doing justice to the idea of political and national unity in the country. Still, the Prime Minister also made it clear that it should be possible for African languages to live in harmony and co-existence with English (Geingob, 1995: 179):

However, this is not to suggest that we wish to promote the English language to the exclusion of all other languages. On the contrary, we would like to see all languages promoted and enriched in their own right. We must therefore not think that English as Official Language and eventually as lingua franca cannot coexist with other languages.

Let us now turn to the linguistic facts as they could be observed back in the 1990s. Generally, the Namibian population today still falls into three main language groups (for a longer discussion see Pütz, 1995b: 158ff)

- ☞ the Bantu languages,
- ☞ the Khoesan languages,
- ☞ the European languages.

The number of speakers of “European” languages (English, Afrikaans, German) at that time was estimated to account for only a little more than 10%, which at the same time revealed that a high number of Namibians, i.e. 90% of the population, spoke African languages, i.e. Bantu or Khoesan. It is worth mentioning that Afrikaans, the former co-official language and lingua franca, was (and certainly still is) spoken by the great majority of European language users as a first language. In contrast to the relatively frequent use of Afrikaans, English, the official language in the country, was spoken as a mother tongue by only a very small fragment of the population, i.e. 1%. Beside English as the official medium of communication, the remaining languages, i.e. Bantu, Khoesan, Afrikaans and German, were considered to be national languages on an equal basis.

Taking Fishman's concept of diglossia into account, we may rather grossly state that English acted as the prestigious 'high variety' associated with the liberation movement SWAPO and future international status, while the African languages of Namibia in particular were deemed to perform 'lower' functions having only symbolic value in Namibian society. English has become a marker of a new anti-colonial identity: in Namibia it still functions as an instrument of liberation and a symbol of ideological neutrality and nation-building. Nonetheless, an empirical survey of linguistic attitudes of three different ethnic groups clearly showed that the great majority of these communities fully agreed with the assertion that English should be the only official language of independent Namibia (Pütz, 1995c). As Harlech-Jones (2001) points out, most Namibians also uncritically accepted the "maximum exposure hypothesis", which refers to the belief that maximum proficiency in a second or foreign language, such as English, is achieved by being exposed to that language as a medium of instruction for as long as possible. Such an assumption counteracts the widely accepted view that balanced bilingualism (as maintained in the school) is of great academic and conceptual benefit to the cognitive development of the child.

Adherents of a "romantic" multilingual language policy model (for more details see section 4.1) consider the language situation in many African states as prototypical examples of a policy that is geared towards linguistic imperialism and linguicism. According to Phillipson (1992: 55), linguicism refers to ideologies and structures where language is a means for effecting or maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources. When we look at the language situation of most of the African states, we get the impression that the European languages, English, French and Portuguese, as the sole official languages fulfil precisely these negative relationships and correspondences as set out by Phillipson. Social elites who are in possession of these languages are in positions of political, social, economic and educational power and may be able to control language planning processes for their own advantage and to the detriment of minority language speakers. The Namibian Government has often been accused of precisely these allegations, in the sense that language policy is geared towards the benefit of one particular social group, i.e. the élite, who are included in the select speakers of the official language (English) and who, according to the words of the then minister of Education and Culture, Nahas Angula, are the "Government officials, diplomats, and businessmen". It seems obvious that political leaders accelerated the pace of the language planning process in order to fit their political agendas, which is even more manifest when observing the educational language planning situation in Namibia (Mutumba, 2005: 3).

Educational language planning in Namibia

Namibia's educational language policy stipulates the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction during the first three years of formal schooling (i.e. the lower primary phase), with a gradual switch to English in the fourth grade, i.e. English as the medium of instruction beyond the lower primary level. Proficiency in English, the official language, by the end of the seventh year of the primary

cycle was envisaged in order to promote international understanding and Pan-Africanism. Namibian African languages continue to be taught as subjects up to the twelfth grade and there is conditional freedom for private schools to use any language as the medium of instruction (Chamberlaine, 1993: 5).

This, in a nutshell, constitutes the past and present situation as it ought to unfold in current Namibian schools. The fact that the use of the mother tongue is emphasised during the first years of schooling (at least on paper) is an attempt to counteract an often observed sociolinguistic discontinuity between the children's pre-school cognitive categories and the more abstract re-categorisation which the primary school normally effectuates, i.e. when the basic skills of reading, writing and concept formation are being developed. New concepts are difficult to grasp in an unfamiliar, foreign language such as English. Certainly, the most crucial cognitive development occurs in the primary language; therefore it is assumed that the use of the mother tongue effectively enhances learning in the early grades. In other words, the role of the language question in primary-language education is considered to be pivotal to the learning/teaching process. The mother tongue facilitates adjustment between the home and the school and mother-tongue education seems to be a generally accepted pedagogical principle throughout in bilingualism research.

As a deviation from the previous intention of the language policy, John Mutorwa, the Minister of Basic Education, Sport and Culture of Namibia, however, observes and deplores the fact that mother-tongue education in primary schools cannot be guaranteed, for various reasons (Mutorwa, 2004: 1):

In a number of our schools the different home language groups are too small each to justify its own teacher. In consequence one of the languages may be ignored, or the school may opt to teach through English from the outset. Some schools use English, ostensibly on account of parental pressure. In such schools, not only do learners lose the benefit of being taught through the medium of their mother tongue, but they are also deprived of the opportunity of taking their home language as a subject. My ministry is currently looking into ways of minimizing this type of deviation from the intention of the language policy.

Swarts (2001) states that one of the main reasons why, in reality, the mother tongue is not even *taught* throughout formal education is the lack of necessary resources, as revealed in an insufficient amount of qualified teachers, a lack of teaching materials in the mother tongue and a general disregard for the promotion of Namibian languages. In addition, the concept of ethnicity is a delicate issue in a sense that, during the Apartheid regime, the indigenous languages were used as instruments of ethnolinguistic fragmentation and thus had acquired negative connotations. Harlech-Jones (2001), an "inside" expert of the Namibian language policy and planning situation, set up a number of "prevalent assumptions" which seem to be widespread in Namibia. Serious questioning and closer inspection of these assumptions is said to contribute "to fresh and original thinking about language policy" (Harlech-Jones, 2001: 26).

Some of the findings of research in bilingual education in general and Namibian classroom practice in particular suggest new perspectives on educational language planning. According to Harlech-Jones (2001), some of these include: (i) a primary focus on educational criteria (not political, social or economic), (ii) consultation of and cooperation with teachers, (iii) recognition of other factors than language (such as parental and home factors, competence of teachers, socioeconomic status, textbooks and teaching materials, etc.), (iv) investment in reading materials in Namibian indigenous languages, (v) maintenance bilingualism promoting two languages at the same time, (vi) arguments against “maximum exposure of English”, and (vii) the best-known language should be used as oral medium of instruction.

One of these assumptions entails the premise that “everyone knows exactly what having an official language means for the shape of language policy in education” (Harlech-Jones, 2001: 27). This proposition underlines the deplorable outcome that language policy in education has primarily been developed on political and economic grounds which, as is often the case, reflects the values and ideas of those in powerful positions. The primary focus should rather be on educational criteria (e.g. curricula, learner characteristics, parental issues, educational outcome, resources, etc.) and not on political, social and economic requirements. To be sure, educationists in Namibia were not consulted by language policy makers and government officials and thus did not have a significant role in framing educational policies.

There are quite a number of pedagogical advisers and bilingual educationists who, besides arguing against an English-medium policy in Namibia, also call for a multilingual approach throughout the *whole* school career, therefore including secondary schooling. Whittaker (1999), for example, favours an additive multilingual framework, which refers to proficiency in two or more languages with positive cognitive outcomes and which, in general, recognises the equality of all Namibian languages. In this regard he advocates the gradual introduction of English as a subject in primary schools, while the medium of instruction should be the respective primary indigenous languages. Only half of the learning/teaching processes in secondary schools would be carried out in English and the other half in the students’ specific primary languages (i.e. mother tongues). This perspective, however, raises another serious issue as far as the corpus-planning question is concerned. Reference is made here to the widespread Namibian assumption that “the local languages are so poorly developed that they cannot be used as mediums of education” (Harlech-Jones, 2001: 31). Although non-official indigenous or national languages can certainly be used orally in order to provide for classroom interaction and dialogue, there is a lack of reading materials in these languages, which hinders the development of reading competence and literacy, as well as numeracy skills. However, even if the use of national languages as languages of literacy in the Namibian classroom is necessarily restricted to a certain extent, competence in one of the national languages is usually required in job applications throughout Namibia. Employers seek applicants who, in addition to English, are conversant with at least Afrikaans/German and one of the national languages at the regional or district level (Legère, 2001). Due to the fact that English has a

weak position as a lingua franca in Namibia and the main oral medium of communication is either Afrikaans or one of the national languages, Legère argues that the use of a second (national) language in formal official domains should be made more legitimate by the Namibian government, thus contributing to a two-language policy approach.

Taking Harlech-Jones' set of assumptions and hypotheses for a new language policy in Namibia into account, we may suggest that the primary language (mother tongue) should be used as a spoken medium of instruction at primary school and partially at secondary school (at least in some junior secondary grades). The main language (mother tongue) should be the medium in which the child and the teacher feel most comfortable; it should be the language in which quality teaching and meaningful learning can take place in participative, learner-centred education. English then could be offered from the beginning of primary school as a subject and gradually developed as a literacy language which, as Harlech-Jones calls it, may then give access to external "library" knowledge. Such measures certainly also involve educating, advising and convincing parents of the pedagogical advantages and values of instruction in the mother tongue and the careful choice of competent teachers when English-medium instruction at junior secondary level and higher is concerned (Swarts, 2001).

Let us now turn to a brief discussion of the newly developing field of cognitive sociolinguistics and its main ingredients in order to apply some of its socio-cognitive tools to an investigation of the mechanisms of the Namibian language policy situation.

Cognitive sociolinguistics: Variation, construal and speaker's choice

The essence of Langacker's conception of grammar lies in the fact that it is conceived of as a usage-based model. This "social" view of language suggests a link between the theory of cognitive grammar/linguistics and the study of sociolinguistics, which traditionally focuses on the relationship between language and society. Dirven (2005), in his survey on major strands of cognitive linguistics, discusses the concept of a usage-based model from two perspectives: (i) by citing Langacker's characterisation of the term, which emphasises the actual use of the linguistic system and a speaker's knowledge of this use; and (ii) by referring to a more recent interpretation of the term in mainly two ways. The first is the method of data collection and the use of corpora, thereby strongly suggesting corpus linguistics as a major research discipline, and the second is the analysis of social and regional variation as embedded in the context of traditional sociolinguistics.

As Dirven (2005: 21) further observes, the study of language variation is still largely absent from cognitive-linguistic research. A notable exception is Geeraerts *et al.*'s (1994) concern with lexis-oriented sociolinguistics or cognitive sociolexicology. Generally, according to one of the main proponents of cognitive linguistics, George Lakoff, a "cognitive sociolinguistics" has already been in existence for quite some time, mainly in terms of ideologies and metaphors (Pires

de Oliveira, 2001: 43). In fact, for the last 10 years, the study of ideology, stereotypes and cultural models has already been a central issue within the paradigm of cognitive linguistics (Dirven *et al.*, 2001a; Dirven *et al.*, 2001b). Generally, the majority of studies in cognitive sociolinguistics so far have dealt with analyses of ideologies and metaphors as they are manifested (or hidden) in spoken and written texts of the public discourse and the media. The counterpart of (but similar to) such a cognitive “sociolinguistics of language”, i.e. a cognitive “sociology of language”, on the other hand, would then have to take account of the sociological aspects of language use pertaining to the roles, statuses, belief systems, values and identities.

As was pointed out in the introduction, Geeraerts (2003a) asserts that an extension of cognitive linguistics to sociolinguistics is an inevitable part of the cognitive linguistics paradigm. In line with a usage-based grammar, the social nature of language implies the concepts of variation and heterogeneity, which are based on the fact that whenever people engage in talk they make choices depending on the communicative situation. The idea that language use is grounded in our daily experience is a central claim of cognitive grammar. It means that semantic structure is subjective in nature and meaning is equated with conceptualisation or mental experience. In choosing a particular expression, a speaker “construes” a given situation or event in a specific way. From a range of alternatives, he or she selects one particular image to structure its conceptual content for communicative purposes. Lee (2001: 2) cites the following example:

The path falls deeply into the valley.

The path climbs steeply out of the valley.

Both sentences are used to describe the same situation, but they hardly express the same meaning. As Lee points out, the difference is in terms of perspective. In (1) the viewpoint is that of “someone looking into the valley”, whereas in (2) it is that of “someone looking up from the valley floor” (Lee, 2001: 2-3). A particular viewing position is constructed and each utterance involves a particular construal of the situation in question. Likewise, from a sociolinguistic perspective, Coulmas (2006) argues that every aspect of every utterance is the result of the speaker’s choice. Variability in language means that speakers are able to adjust their speech to selected aspects of their environment.

The notion of construal and speaker choice can also be made fruitful for a novel conception of a speaker’s *linguistic repertoire*. Speaker choice not only includes knowledge of appropriate language structures at all linguistic levels, it also makes reference to a broader conceptualisation that a speaker entertains. In other words, utterances may differ with respect to how they construe the described situation. Construal then is a matter of how a situation is conceptualised and the capacity of “construing” a given situation or event in specific ways is part of the speaker’s linguistic repertoire and communicative competence.

Let us now turn to a discussion of the Namibian language policy in the light of findings from cognitive sociolinguistics.

Namibian language policy: Ideology and metaphor as socio-cognitive tools

Language and ideology

By drawing the reader's attention to the "incorporative spirit of cognitive linguistics", Hawkins (2001) propagates the view that cognitive linguistics (CL) is predestined to include questions and concerns about how language relates to ideology. He sees an intricate relationship between language and ideology, especially when viewing language as a system which mediates the interactions of human beings with the world around them (Hawkins, 2001: 5). In situations of social, economic or cultural conflict, a certain experience of *tension* may arise, which may be perceived as an indicator or result of ideological differences. Thus, according to Hawkins, when we engage in studying ideologies, we can set out in search of the human experience of tensions which arise whenever an experience is not consistent with a person's expectation for that experience (2001: 8):

When a person's expectations for the experience are driven by one ideological system and the actual nature of the experience is shaped, controlled or otherwise determined by a different ideological system, the experience is almost guaranteed to cause tension for the person whose expectations are violated. We can begin, then, with the characterisation of ideology as a system of ideas that shape experiences and/or expectations for experiences.

Afrocentricity and the ecology of language

This vague but useful conception of ideology as a system of ideas that shape experiences can be taken up when discussing the ideologically-laden language situation in most African states, i.e. the socio-political context of language use. To this purpose it is useful to make reference to Mazrui and Mazrui's (2001) term "Afrocentricity", which is a concept in opposition to a Eurocentric worldview. It suggests that a Eurocentric or Anglophone image is replete with metaphors, cultural models and conceptualisations pertaining to a "racialist premise of Black inferiority", "white enslavement" and "colonisation", thus creating *tension* in terms of a Black identity with negative connotations and a sense of cultural oppression. Afrocentrism therefore offers a perspective that sees an ultimate control of one's own African language as the only way towards liberation from Western linguistic and cultural ideology.

Thus, what we are witnessing in most African states is the implementation of a European language as the dominant medium of communication and sole or semi-official language, as is the case with English in Namibia. In this regard, the concept of "linguistic imperialism" has been established during the past decade. It refers to "a particular theory for analyzing relations between dominant and dominated cultures" and more specifically it focuses on "the structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992: 15). Linguistic imperialism, a term coined by Robert Phillipson, simply means the imposition of one language at the disadvantage of many other languages and cultures. The terms "dominant" and "dominated" languages express this power

relationship between the two competing languages. The argument unfolds like this: indigenous (dominated) languages were never accorded high status in any colonial society in Africa, and the European colonial (dominating) language is seen as a symbol of power and prestige. Official European languages have all the rights, whereas indigenous languages often have only symbolic value. The destructive language policies that many African states pursue have inevitably led to the creation of linguistic and cultural alienation, as well as to language shift, language loss, and ultimately also language death. Therefore, a number of contemporary linguists stress the importance of a multicultural language policy, which, however, poses enormous linguistic, socio-cultural and economic problems before it can be implemented. Adherents to this “linguistic diversity view” are certainly in agreement with an ecological approach to language planning that favours the maintenance of languages and cultures and the promotion of foreign language education.

According to Mühlhäusler (1997: 5), the term “ecology” can be defined as follows:

It is a dynamic system consisting of a number of inhabitants and meaningful interconnections between them. Students of linguistic ecologies will tend to focus on languages as the inhabitants, and other parameters such as the speaker’s situation, and so on, as the supporting habitat. This view suggests a working definition of a linguistic ecology, as functionally structured linguistic diversity sustained by a multitude of environmental factors.

Consequently, an ecological approach emphasises the dynamic and changing relationship between languages and that it is the functional links between them which are important. These links create a mutually supportive system. Such a model assumes that linguistic diversity is in no way causally related to conflict, though of course language may become a major mobilising factor in situations where a cultural group feels itself threatened, or where cultural and linguistic borders coincide with other borders along which access to power and resources is unequally distributed (Mühlhäusler, 1997). These two conflicting approaches – monolingual or “English-only” policies on the one hand and linguistic and cultural diversity on the other – seem to be situated along a continuum of two paradigms. We may call them

- (i) an Ecology of Language Paradigm and
- (ii) a Domination of English Paradigm (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995)

Ecology of Language Paradigm	Domination of English Paradigm
multilingualism maintenance of languages and cultures equality in communication linguistic human rights foreign language education	monolingualism one nation/one language domination of one European language linguistic discrimination invisibility of languages

Language ecology includes various factors, such as multilingualism, the maintenance of languages and cultures, equality in communication, linguistic

human rights, the promotion of foreign language education, etc. Contrary to the set of characteristics allocated to the Ecology of Language Paradigm, a revealing factor of the Domination of English paradigm is monolingualism. In this respect, a language policy is basically monolingual, following a “one nation-one language” approach, which leads to linguistic discrimination and the invisibility of other, in our case, African languages.

Two opposing cognitive models of language policy

The two paradigms can roughly be equated with two dominant competing models or ideologies that have shaped language policies in recent years. Based on Geeraerts (2003a), who argues that our thinking about language variation and linguistic standardisation can be reduced to two underlying, opposing cultural models, i.e. a rationalist one and a romantic one, Polzenhagen and Dirven (forthcoming) apply this conceptual dichotomy to the current discourse in language policy and globalisation. Thus the Domination of English Paradigm identified above is more in line with a rationalist view in which language is seen as a medium of communication and the global language English conceptualised as a neutral medium of social participation and homogeneity. The Ecology of Language Paradigm, on the other hand, makes reference to a “romantic” view of language. Here language serves as a means of expression (rather than communication) whereby a global language is seen as a medium of social exclusion and a threat to local identities. Polzenhagen and Dirven (forthcoming) note that language policy proponents are to be regarded as being situated along a continuum comprising the two end poles of a rationalist and a romantic model. They further point out that these opposing models can be captured by making reference to the two conceptual metaphors LANGUAGE AS A TOOL (rationalist) and LANGUAGE AS AN IDENTITY MARKER (romantic).

At first sight, the language policy situation as it unfolds in Namibia is clearly related to the rationalist model, where English as sole official language serves as a *tool* of wider communication or *lingua franca*. This view is expressed in a statement by the then Prime Minister Hage Geingob (1995: 176):

On Independence, therefore, we had to choose a language that would open up the world to us. English was the obvious choice. After all, English is the most widely spoken language, spoken by some six hundred million people. There is no corner of the globe where you could not get by if you knew English.

Clearly, this “shrinking world” argument which underlies the metaphor LANGUAGE AS A TOOL is geared towards a functional view of language, highlighting concepts such as “Pan-Africanism”, “wider communication”, and even “communication with the United Nations”. The criteria are functional in nature, but serve, at best, the communicative and social needs of the educated elite, an argument also put forward by Heine (1992: 22), who maintains that only about three per cent of an African community go outside their state to represent their country or to take part in international conferences. Before we look at the specific

situation in Namibia, using the two metaphors as guidelines towards investigating language policy implementations, let us briefly consider the current debate between the rationalistic and the romantic language policy models of the proponents.

Adherents to an ecological or romantic language policy model (e.g. Mühlhäusler, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas) have severely criticised current rationalist models by condemning the imposition of European languages as controlling means of power, dominance and general human interference. Recently, such accounts have been counteracted by a number of contemporary researchers and sociologists of language, who regard the status and use of global English as a neutral, culturally all-embracing language that takes account of individual and group identities at the local, regional, national and international level. Similarly, Wolf and Igboanusi (2006: 357) maintain that “English has undergone and continues to undergo processes of cultural adaptation and hybridity, and thus cannot be considered as culturally alienated”. They maintain that the dichotomy of English as a “foreign language” on the one hand and indigenous languages on the other is no longer valid, given the fact that, in the educational domain (in the state of Cameroon, for example), text books have been indigenised and reflect current African socio-cultural realities. This is not to say, the authors point out, that African languages should be neglected, but that an Africanised form of English should be made the prime choice for educational purposes. In other words, an ecological, multilingual framework is desired, which, however, does not anymore view the global language English as an outgrowth of Western neo-colonialism and exploitation. In the same vein, Edwards’s (2004) critical remarks are not directed at ecology *per se*. Rather, he asserts that the underlying ideology of the “new ecology of language”, as he calls it, is insufficiently examined, especially when “romantic” arguments such as “human interference”, “diversity of languages”, “human rights” and “literacy and education” are too naïvely discussed and therefore highly questionable. They are naïve in the sense that romanticists “have a view of a world in which there is room for all languages, where the goodness of diversity is a given, where ‘the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb’” (Edwards, 2004: 276).

Conceptual metaphors and the Namibian case

Let us now examine more closely the two conceptual metaphors as they apply to the official Namibian language policy situation (Namibian Constitution), i.e. LANGUAGE AS A TOOL (rationalist) and LANGUAGE AS AN IDENTITY MARKER (romantic). As Polzenhagen and Dirven (forthcoming) have pointed out, the conceptual metaphor LANGUAGE AS AN IDENTITY MARKER stresses a Neo-Whorfian line of argument which says that the semantic structure of the language that a person speaks either determines or limits the ways in which they perceive or conceptualise the world around them. Loss of a language therefore also entails a loss of the cultural characteristics or the specific worldview of a language group. Clearly, the focus is not on language as communication, but rather on language as a medium of expressing different values, attitudes and identities. Language then serves as a marker of individual and group identity.

Interestingly enough, Article 3 (1) of the Namibian Constitution (1990), which states that “The official language of Namibia shall be English” also makes frequent reference to the multilingual and multicultural make-up of the country, thus suggesting an alignment with the romantic language policy model. Even from a judicial perspective, the Constitution provides for individual language service which entails use of the mother tongue for referential (not expressive) purposes (The Namibian Constitution, 1990: Article 11 (1)):

No persons who are arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed promptly in a language they understand of the grounds for such arrest.

At first sight, linguistic human rights from a judicial perspective seem to be taken account of, even if it is highly unlikely that potential detainees will be able to understand a written statement in an African language in which they lack reading competence. Unfortunately, not much research is available on the issue of communication and misunderstandings in the Namibian courtroom.

In a number of other contexts – apart from the situation in court – the Constitution allows for every Namibian person to be entitled “to enjoy, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject”, thus guaranteeing, at least on paper, the right of using one’s mother tongue in informal, low contexts or secondary domains such as the home or religion. Thus the metaphor LANGUAGE AS AN IDENTITY MARKER, which highlights characteristics of one’s belonging to a cultural group, is valid when we consider language policy implementations for the purpose of rather informal domains. The situation certainly requires a different perspective when we look in more detail into the educational language policy situation as it unfolds in Namibia.

The dynamics of language and ideology in the Namibian context

If we look at the criteria according to which English was selected as the only official language in Namibia, we may observe that they were purely functional in nature, i.e. unity and nation-building, international relations (science and technology), as well as wider communication throughout Africa and the United Nations. To put it simply, English as the dominant language is glorified and African languages are to a certain degree greatly downgraded or even devalued. From an ideological perspective, English is considered the language of liberation – it was the language used by the Black opposition when fighting against the South African Apartheid regime – and the language of international status in regard to diplomacy, trade and business.

Until Independence in 1990, Afrikaans had been firmly established as co-official language alongside English. It was the language used by the administration and the medium of practically all secondary and most primary education. Today, Afrikaans is spoken as a native language by 10% of the Namibian population and more than 85% of the population are said to have some knowledge of it. Because of its role during the Apartheid regime, Afrikaans is now being stigmatised as the

“language of the oppressor” and an “unwanted *lingua franca*” in modern Namibia. Furthermore, according to the UNIN Report (1981), the language has no value outside southern Africa and therefore serves as an “instrument of isolation and insularity”. Still, among some researchers the language is seen as the only national language which efficiently promotes inter-ethnic communication; and although the government, the mass media and political groups within the country all try to suppress Afrikaans, it still remains a popular social and informal medium of communication.

The language policy situation in Namibia, with an emphasis on the “English-Afrikaans” debate, has for a considerable time simply ignored the status and use of the national, autochthonous languages. There is hardly any literature on language policy and language planning which would consider the recognition of African languages alongside English or Afrikaans as a serious proposition. One reason why local languages in general have been devalued in colonial systems refers to the fact that they have been treated as dialects/varieties or vernaculars which are insufficiently developed and therefore not equipped to serve as administrative, educational, socio-economic and cultural media of communication. This assumption is very much in line with the Enlightenment belief that, within the conception of progress, European civilisation and European language represented an advance on an earlier, more primitive condition usually involving the use of jargons, dialects and other “marginalised” varieties of language (Williams, 1992: 15). In the same way, the standard language was considered “more logical” and became the normative structure for any study of non-standard varieties/dialects.

Some more arguments were put forward to support the status and use of European languages as sole official media of communication. Autochthonous African languages are considered an obstacle to promoting national unity and nation-building. This often-quoted “national unity” argument holds that the use of an African language as an official language in a multilingual context will lead to ethnic conflict, which could destroy the national unity created since the liberation struggle. Therefore, the Namibian government argues, it is more appropriate to use a neutral, foreign and “atribal” language such as English, which has been implemented in Namibia to prevent any one ethnic community from becoming dominant, and to eliminate unnecessary competition.

As can be seen clearly, each of the three major languages or language groups, i.e. English, Afrikaans and the African languages, are ideologically loaded in a sense that each entails some socio-historical or political justification. By the term “ideology” here is meant “beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein, 1979: 193). In other words, the socio-political aspects of language and the question of authority and power in language evoke a strong emotional response on the part of speakers of that language. English in Namibia, for example, entails an image which is intended to evoke positive feelings such as “liberation”, “wellbeing”, “social status”, etc., while Afrikaans evokes an opposite view, namely that this is the language by which people were oppressed and even tortured. And the government indeed succeeds in getting the message across to the majority of the Namibian people. Thus, the choice of English as sole official

language and the abolition of Afrikaans as the former co-official language are justified on socio-political and attitudinal grounds. One may add that notions such as liberation or oppression or, in short, the imposition of languages, is not merely a matter of socio-political organisation, but also has its roots in the minds of people in positions of authority and power (Hawkins, 2001).

From the viewpoint of cognitive sociolinguistics, therefore, this socio-political perspective may (in the worst case) be described as a conceptual ideological system which entails images such as the HERO, the VICTIM and the VILLAIN. The lives of the HERO and the VICTIM are generally highly valued, while the VILLAIN is seen as an outsider of a particular social order. If we apply these concepts to the real language situation in Namibia, we may state that everything associated with English is conceptualised as the new HERO and former VICTIM, while issues related to Afrikaans are seen as the VILLAIN or oppressor associated with a wicked society. The African languages themselves assume a neutral status in the sense that they are not given much attention, nor do they have any socio-political value. Their speakers, of course, are depicted as the VICTIMS of the former Apartheid regime, and rightly so.

These associations are conceptualised within the framework of cognitive linguistics, which assumes that meaning ultimately derives from embodied human experience. And, as Hawkins (2001) points out, among embodied human experiences, nothing is more powerful than life and death. Although I do not want to associate English and Afrikaans in Namibia with absolute experiences such as life and death, I still feel that the dichotomy between “liberation” and “oppression” is appropriate here, due to the fact that it is based on concrete and real experience. And as Janicki (1990) has so convincingly pointed out, the set of fundamental beliefs – often called essentialism – that a speaker or hearer has about language will markedly contribute to alleviating or deepening conflicts.

Metaphor, ideology and the Namibian constitution: an exemplary analysis

The empirical part of this paper will use the conceptual tool of the “conduit” metaphor by making reference to the language policy situation in Namibia in greater detail. It will be shown that the language policy discourse and ideology in Namibia can be made explicit and conceived of in terms of the mechanism of the “conduit” metaphor and a number of semiotic processes inherent in the analysis of language ideologies (cf. Wee, 2002).

The meaning of the conduit metaphor

Metaphor as a cognitive instrument is also closely linked with the notion of “construal”. This means that metaphorical constructions are not just ways of expressing ideas by means of language, but ways of thinking about things or a particular phenomenon. For instance, we sometimes think about the concept of “time” (target domain) in terms of “money” (source domain) or about the concept of “anger” (target domain) in terms of a ‘dangerous animal’ (source domain).

Generally then, metaphors are mappings from source domains to target domains, thus revealing the structuring power of metaphors. Source domains tend to refer to relatively concrete aspects of human experience (such as heat, a building, physical space) and target domains involve rather abstract entities (such as intimacy, an argument, social status). A metaphor which has received much attention in recent years is the conduit metaphor according to which communication is thought of as involving the transportation of meanings from speaker (addressor) to hearer (addressee), i.e. ideas are assumed to travel along a conduit. Here the process of communication is conceptualised in terms of transport. Such a view of language and communication is deeply entrenched in our culture, in a sense that we both think and talk about communication. Reddy (1993: 166) provides the following examples based on the conduit metaphor:

Try to get your thoughts across better.

None of Mary's feelings came through to me with any clarity.

You still haven't given me any idea of what you mean.

They all seem to suggest that linguistic communication is conceptualised in terms of the sending and receiving of parcels, i.e. the transfer of thoughts, emotions and feelings by means of linguistic expressions. As we will see in the next paragraph, the conduit metaphor is instrumental in revealing the powerful ideologies which seem to frame the language policy discourse as it can be observed in the state of Namibia.

The ideological power of the "conduit" metaphor in Namibia's language policy

The present discussion is in line with Wee's (2002) cognitive-semiotic account of the role of metaphor in the production and reproduction of language ideologies as they can be observed in the context of Singapore's language policy. Wee investigates language ideologies in terms of three semiotic processes, namely iconisation, recursiveness and erasure, to which he adds another process termed performativity. Let us briefly discuss these processes with reference to the Singaporean situation and then see how the model can be applied to the situation in Namibia.

It is generally agreed that a close link between language and ethnicity is inherent in the use of the primary language or the mother tongue and one's ethnically defined culture, in terms of norms, values and belief systems. Thus the Chinese language (Mandarin) in Singapore is essential to the sense of cultural identity of its speakers; it serves as an "emotionally acceptable mother-tongue", being in stark contrast to English, which, as a Western language, carries fundamentally different community values. This is a case of *iconisation*, where "the language is not merely indexically linked to one's ethnic identity, but is treated as inalienable and essential" (Wee 2002: 209). The second semiotic process, i.e. *recursiveness*, is related to iconicity in a sense that intergroup distinctions are reflected or are said to recur in intragroup distinctions. In the case of Singapore, the intergroup level is represented by a contrast between Asians (=Singaporeans) and Westerners

(=non-Singaporeans) and their respective languages, Mandarin and English, a distinction which then, in turn, also recurs at the linguistic and cultural level prevalent in Chinese, Malay and Indian communities.

The term *erasure* as the third semiotic process inherent in the model refers to the fact that, often in language policy discourse, the sender or the agency is omitted. Thus, the role of the sender is made invisible and attention is focussed on the receiver of the message, who then is supposed to take advantage of using the recommended language, i.e. the mother tongue in the case of Chinese or the second language in the case of English. Wee (2002) cites an example from the Singaporean language policy situation where cultural values such as filial piety, loyalty, benevolence and love are more or less anonymously offered as traditional Chinese values inherent in the mother tongue (Mandarin) without attempting to explain the reason for or the original source of this list of values. A final semiotic process added by Wee (2002) refers to the notion of *performativity*, which aims at an analysis of the lexical choices inherent in conceptual metaphors, such as, for example, the conduit metaphor. Lexical variation “helps keep the metaphor ‘fresh’ each time a speech is delivered without necessarily doing violence to the ideological content that is being articulated” (Wee, 2002: 213). The discourse of the “Speak Mandarin Campaign”, for instance, has as its goal to encourage the Chinese community to shift away from other Chinese dialects towards Mandarin as sole official mother tongue. This is achieved by treating Chinese dialects in a more negative way as a “burden”, while the more neutral term “load” is often used when referring to the preferred languages Mandarin or English, thus emphasising the government’s stance on language policy issues.

Generally, the conduit metaphor is particularly suited for investigating language ideologies, especially when they are manifested in metalinguistic discourse, i.e. debates and arguments on language and language-related issues. Communication between the sender (Namibian government/officials, etc.) and the receiver (Namibian citizens, educational language policy implementers, etc.) takes place via a conduit (speech/writing) along which the thoughts or ideas are transmitted.

Thus, the conduit metaphor as it may be applied to the Namibian situation entails the following conceptual ingredients (adapted from the model of Wee, 2002):

- ☞ The mother tongue is a container for African values and belief systems (linguistic and cultural heritage)
- ☞ English is a container for “international” opportunities (communication, globalisation, Pan-Africanism, United Nations)
- ☞ To be competent in two languages (English and a national language) is to have access to different values and belief systems, i.e. English: international/unity and African: authentic/cultural.
- ☞ The filled container (language(s)) is sent along a “conduit” (e.g. writing) or through space (e.g. speech) to the hearer, who then takes the ideas and objects out of the container.

Let us now consider some spoken and written texts related to the official language policy discourse in Namibia and see how the “conduit” model and some

of the semiotic processes exemplified above can be adapted to these patterns of communication.

Metaphor and the Namibian language policy discourse: An analysis of some exemplary texts

Whereas English is conceptualised by the Singaporean government as bringing the undesirable outcome of Westernisation and non-Asian values, governmental attitudes in Namibia towards English are more favourable. One of the main functional criteria for the choice of English as sole official language in Namibia referred to the concepts of national *unity* and *ethnolinguistic fragmentation*. Almost 10 years before independence, the future government, SWAPO, had already proclaimed the following (UNIN, 1981: 37):

“Unity”: The language chosen should contribute toward the new nation’s primary task; that is, achieving unity and national reconstruction in the wake of deliberate policy of ethnolinguistic fragmentation pursued by the illegal occupying regime (emphasis M.P.)

Language is presented here as a distinct container for the concepts of national unity and national reconstruction, which can be awarded to the nation and the Namibian population as a whole (i.e. the receiver of the “conduit”) once the “right” language (i.e. the “container” English) is selected and used. The idea can further be captured in terms of the LANGUAGE IS A KEY metaphor, where the official status and the use of English is seen as a KEY to national homogeneity and cross-cultural understanding (cf. Berthele (forthcoming) for an account of the English-only debate in the US). The (positive) goal of having English in one’s possession is in stark contrast to what Namibia had experienced during South African occupation, namely an educational strategy based on racism and racial segregation. Under the Apartheid regime, so-called mother tongue instruction had been used to indoctrinate black school children with a racist curriculum for social inferiority. African languages had been used as an ideological tool to preserve the power of the elite.

As regards the “uniting” function of English, we may also make reference to the LANGUAGE IS A BOND metaphor, where language is seen as a common link which holds the set of culturally diverse groups and communities together (Berthele, forthcoming). Interestingly enough, the BOND metaphor, in a sense of “greater understanding”, also relates to Namibia’s indigenous languages, a fact which becomes obvious in a quote by John Mutorwa, the Minister of Basic Education, Sport and Culture who, in an informal speech, once stated to members of the Namibian community (2004):

In a country of linguistic and cultural diversity, we believe it is important that the indigenous language should be promoted as one way of building greater understanding among our citizens.

Although the Minister does not explain the causal relationship that obtains between the promotion of indigenous languages and a context of “greater understanding” among the citizens, he obviously attributes to African languages the same communicational value as is attributed to English as an official language for Namibia. However, much attention is also paid to the fact that “threats” can be felt when discussing the possible choice of one single African Namibian language (UNIN, 1982: 39). Hidden reference is made here to the largest language group, Oshiwambo (mainly situated in Northern Namibia), which accounts for more than 46% of Namibians (UNIN, 1982: 3):

... choosing one of the local languages as the official language could arouse unnecessary intra-linguistic competition and strife. It is conceivable that other Namibians whose languages are not strong enough candidates for national status on a numerical basis might oppose the claims of this language.

Here, we have an indication of the “conduit” metaphor at work. Along with language (e.g. Oshiwambo) also “come” threats and potential conflict such as competition, strife and opposition, thus jeopardising national unity and interethnic communication. The quote is also an illustrative example of the semiotic process of recursiveness, “which involves the projection of a distinction made at one level onto some other level(s) so that the distinction is seen to recur across categories of varying generality” (Wee, 2002: 202). Regarding the quote mentioned before (UNIN, 1982: 3), which is characteristic of the general approach to language policy in Namibia, the distinction that separates English from the national languages thus also “recurs” internally amongst the national languages themselves (such as Oshiwambo, Otjiherero, Nama, Damara).

The notion of “national unity” also entails the important aspect of “communication”, which is seen as paramount in the entire conception of Namibia’s language policy. The functional argument of choosing English as a national and international medium of communication is reflected in an informal interview with the then Minister of Education and Culture, Nahas Angula (carried out by myself in the year of independence in 1990). Here the minister ignores the ideological rationale behind the government’s fundamental decision to choose English as sole official language and stresses the importance of a pragmatic or practical motivation:

We needed now a language which will enhance inter-communal communication in a neutral form. And the English language happened to be neutral in that respect. And we also needed a language of international communication. And of course English is one of those languages ... So I think it is obvious why English was chosen. It is nothing academic, it is nothing sentimental or anything like that; it is something just of pragmatic, practical reasons.

English is conceptualised as a “container” for international values and a globalising world and, at the same time, as a neutral means of inter-ethnic

communication. In contrast to Afrikaans and German (i.e. the former colonial media of communication), as well as other national African languages, English will thus “enhance” and guarantee access to trans-national communication, diplomacy and trade. The idea of “internationality” and the need to avoid isolation is again illustrated in the following passage from the same interview, in which the Minister complained about the status and role of the “suppressor” Afrikaans:

Afrikaans is just like my own language; it will not take you anywhere... as soon as I cross the border to Botswana I'm stuck... by and large, if you want to break out of this isolation – if Namibia is to be part of the international community – we must have an official language which is internationally used.

Although in its report (UNIN, 1981), SWAPO intended to formulate a multilingual, multicultural policy for ALL Namibians, this model reveals a Eurocentric approach focussing on a single language and ignoring the language needs of the majority-language users in the country. Phillipson (1992: 294) points out that the criteria themselves (such as unity, science and technology and wider communication) were presented as though they were derived exclusively from knowledge, and not from value judgements. The Namibian citizen as the “receiver” of the container language English is presented with judgements, attitudes and belief systems, but not with facts and objective knowledge. The semiotic process of “erasure” thus comes to the fore in Namibian language policy in a sense that, in official language policy discourse (e.g. the SWAPO Report), the “sender” of the message, i.e. the complex relationship between language, identity, development and modernisation remains obscure and is not explicitly declared.

Concluding observations and projections

Work on Namibian language policy is now so far advanced that it is time to take seriously the many exhortations to link all the forms of linguistic, social and ideological analysis. In this paper, I have tried to trace the language policy development in Namibia from its beginnings (UNIN, 1981) until the present day, by focussing on these issues from a descriptive point of view as well as from the angle of the newly developed field of cognitive sociolinguistics. Socio-cognitive tools, such as the concepts of language ideology and metaphor, were discussed in the framework of the language policy situation in Namibia, with special reference to English as sole official language and to the minor status of the African national languages. The social role of cognitive linguistics thus is to provide a methodology for understanding the conceptual basis of language policy implementations and “to allow us to articulate better the moral basis of more helpful social and political policies” (Pires de Oliveira, 2001: 43-44). All of this may suggest that we are on a way towards a Critical Cognitive Linguistics (Stockwell, 2001).

What we witness nowadays when we take a closer look at the Namibian language policy debate over the past two decades is a moderate to heavy critique of the current language policy situation. Twenty-five years ago, Hage Geingob, the

Director of the United Nations Institute for Namibia, stated that “local languages would have a vital role to play in society and there would be a need for an overall multilingual language planning policy, in which the various languages are institutionalized to their greatest advantage” (UNIN, 1981). Although there is still a long way to go towards such a multilingual policy in Namibia, hardly anyone now disagrees with having English as official language. What is desirable at this stage is the adoption of an additive bilingualism approach of which the underlying principle would be to maintain home language(s) and cultural diversity. Namibian schools should become single-medium institutions (at least in primary and some phases of secondary school), where the additional language, English, should be taught as a subject by teachers who have attained high language proficiency in the target language.

I would like to conclude by referring to the words of Brian Harlech-Jones, one of the main experts and a keen observer of the educational language policy situation in Namibia, who said the following, with which I (albeit as an outsider) wholeheartedly agree (Harlech-Jones, 2001: 35):

We Namibians see languages as being in opposition to each other, and we ask, “Which one is winning/Which one is losing?” It would be preferable if we could begin to think of language in education in terms of good marriages or good partnerships, in which no one loses; in which all partners play their roles according to their natures, their capacities, and by agreement; and in which all participants contribute towards enhanced success.

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Aspects of the meaning of the word ‘racism’

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But instead of claiming that linguistic categories shape our cognitive system, rather the reverse is a tenet of today’s renewed cognitive thinking about language: language is shaped by our perception of our ecological world, by cognition, by culture (Dirven in Metaphor and nation, 1994).

Introduction

Racism in South Africa is alive and well! That, at least, is the impression one gets when one opens a daily newspaper and takes notice of the frequency of the word *racism* (and related words) that appear in news and in-depth articles. Themes in this regard vary greatly: from accusations and policy explanations to analyses of the South African community. People are accused of racism or are called racists on account of various acts that are implicitly measured against different views held by individuals with regard to the concept RACISM¹.

Should people be asked to define the relevant concept, they mostly refer to an action as an instance of the practice of what they believe the word *racism* should mean. This phenomenon is well illustrated in a 2004 study on educators’ experience of racism in education (in South Africa), in which it was found that 64% of the respondents in an empirical study abstained from answering the question “What is racism?” (cf. De Wet, 2004: 28). The same research also revealed that 88% of the 36% who did answer the question, used – in onomasiological² fashion – the word *discrimination* (cf. De Wet, 2004: 31) to explicate the relevant concept. This finding illustrates a basic cognitive strategy: we tend to exemplify (understand) more abstract concepts in terms of more specific concepts – in this instance an action. In other words: racism is not an act(ion); but to discriminate is – to be precise, the word *racism* does not have a verb correlate, but *discrimination* has: *to discriminate*. Incidentally, this linguistic feature applies to perhaps most – if not all – of the abstract concepts signified by *-ism* words, for instance *capitalism*, *communism*, *socialism*, etc.

Views that people hold with regard to the meaning of a specific word are not necessarily in accordance with what the dictionary claims. But in order to justify the fact that the concept RACISM could be experienced as a synonym of *discrimination*, one has to turn to its lexicographical definition, also because the

¹ Word status is indicated as *cursive*, concept status with SMALL CAPITALS and schematic status in **bold**.

² The onomasiological approach to meaning investigates the relationship of a concept with regard to different words used to refer to the relevant concept, while the semasiological approach examines the different senses of a word (cf. Dirven & Verspoor, 1999:31-59).

polysemous nature reflected by the lexicographical definition – from a semasiological perspective³ – renders a broader semantic view. The lexicographical definition could also support the recognition of the most prototypical sense of the relevant word.

Against the background of the introductory remarks, this article will scrutinise some aspects of the meaning of the word *racism*. At the outset the analysis will focus on one lexicographical definition to determine the semantic nature of definitions in this regard. In addition, some additional dictionary definitions of the word *racism* will be examined in order to support the identification of a prototype, the central member of the relevant conceptual category. In determining the relationship between the words *racism* and *discrimination*, a distinction will also be drawn between the words *racialisation* and *racism*.

People's experience of the concept RACISM, as indicated by findings by De Wet (2004: 31), requires that cognisance should also be taken of the way in which the meaning of the relevant linguistic expression is intimately linked to a specific conceptualisation in the mind of a language user – how specific conceptualisations or specific knowledge configurations serve as “the cognitive domain for the characterization” of its meaning (cf. Taylor, 1995: 84). Taylor (2002: 196/7) also points out that “more often than not, a semantic unit needs to be conceptualized against more than one domain” and that “domains overlap and interact in numerous and complex ways”. In this way the different domains constitute a domain matrix (cf. Taylor, 2002: 197). Therefore, especially within a South African context, it is vital to view the conceptual contents of the word *racism* against such a domain matrix, which will constitute, *inter alia*, its political salience, historically as well as in the present – as well as the resulting imprint of racism by virtue of underlying image schemas and categorising mechanisms relating to a broader conceptualisation of a political domain in which the concept of racism took shape.

Owing to the semantic interrelationship between the senses of the words *racism* and *discrimination*, the concept RACISM will be analysed as a conceptual blend. Against this background it will be suggested that the act of discrimination functions as a prototypical act of racism. In conclusion, reference will be made to some semantically related words.

Dictionary definitions of the word racism (also known as racialism)

The *Collins English Dictionary* (Hanks, 1979) reveals two senses concerning the entry *racialism* (or *racism*):

1. the belief that races have distinctive cultural characteristics determined by hereditary factors and that this endows some races with an intrinsic

³ Although onomasiological and semasiological views do not necessarily reflect “mirror images of each other” (cf. Taylor, 1995:262), it is also true that a specific linguistic expression is mostly determined by onomasiological as well as semasiological salience (cf. Dirven & Verspoor, 1999:54).

superiority over others. 2. abusive or aggressive behaviour towards members of another race on the basis of such a belief.

The first sense (“belief”) refers to an abstract mental condition, exemplified by the stative⁴ verb *believe*. It also spells out the nature of the specific belief as a distinction and a value judgment – implicitly reflecting a discriminating judgment. Although the second sense – a specific kind of behaviour – is also very vague with regard to the specific assumed actions, the word *behaviour*, as a derivative of the non-stative (dynamic) verb *behave*, at least suggests action.

It further is important to notice that the first sense of the word *racism* renders numerous interpretations, mainly because a belief will not be visible without any explicated manifestation. In accordance with an onomasiological approach, diverse synonym definitions are given in translating dictionaries, for instance in *The New English-German Dictionary: der Rassenhaß* (“racial hatred”); *der Rassismus* (“racism”); and *die Rassenpolitik* (“racial politics”).

The second sense of the word, according to the *Collins English Dictionary*, is also not very clear-cut. The reason lies in the fact that the verb *behave* belongs to the sense relation hyponymy, “defined in terms of the inclusion of the sense of one item in the sense of another” (cf. Hurford & Heasley, 1983: 106). Although the features “abusive” and “aggressive” (within the sense description of the relevant lexicographical definition) limit the nature of the specific behaviour to a certain extent, the word *behaviour* still functions on a superordinate level, implicating numerous kinds of behaviour as hyponyms. As a result, it is not strange that the word *discrimination* – not only because it is used as a derivative of the verb *to discriminate* – is used to exemplify racist behaviour, again in accordance with an onomasiological approach.

The close relationship between the concepts RACISM and DISCRIMINATION is also seen in the way people use the words *racism* and *discrimination* interchangeably – or on the assumption that the one implies the other. This is clearly illustrated by Gullestad (2006: 228) when she discusses a definition of racism by a researcher (Lien), but doubts whether the specific definition can capture “the differentiated and shifting motivations and justifications for discriminatory practices”. In many contexts the tie between the two concepts becomes so close that language users often fail to recognise the fact that the relevant concept’s relation depends on the principle of unilateral implication. Accordingly, RACISM implies discrimination, but DISCRIMINATION does not necessarily imply racism.

Should one – for that reason and by virtue of the fact that the lexicographical definitions imply it – make the plausible assumption that the sense of *discrimination* is encapsulated by the concept RACISM, a clear examination of the conceptual contents of the word *discrimination* needs to be done. In this regard one needs to take into account the fact that the word *discrimination* also functions

⁴ The term *stative* is used for “a verb which usually refers to a state (i.e. an unchanging condition), for example *believe, have, belong, contain, cost, differ, own...*” (cf. Richards *et al.*, 1989:273; also see Lyons, 1968:325).

on a superordinate level, including different kinds of actions within diverse contexts – (discriminating) actions, like inclusion, exclusion, privileging, exemption, insult, negation, denial, etc. in accordance with (distinguishing/distinctive) racial criteria. Furthermore, these actions can be very harsh, in which instances the racist intentions are very obvious. But they can also be very subtle, often in a linguistic disguise – and sometimes even unintended – which leads to what Gullestad (2004: 187) calls “racism in the name of the good”. Another complicating factor involves the polysemous nature of the verb *to discriminate*, which will be referred to in the next section.

A further analysis of the definitions of the word *racism* from six different English dictionaries⁵ reveals a rather complex conceptual content of the relevant concept. Firstly, the word *racism* embraces concepts associated with words like *prejudice*, *animosity*, *belief*, *adherence to*, *advocacy*, *doctrine*, *program*, *practice*, *feeling* and *action* on the presumption that people are to be differentiated on account of different characteristics, which are manifestations of superiority or inferiority. It is also assumed (by the *Oxford Talking Dictionary*) that the conceptual contents of words like *prejudice*, *discrimination* and *antagonism* link closely with the relevant concept. It is also very important to notice that the concept of differentiation is implied in all the definitions – as was mentioned previously.

Discrimination as a prototypical act of racism

A previous assertion, namely that the concept RACISM is exemplified by a more cognitive convenient concept that could be related to an action by way of its linguistic manifestation in a root verb (*to discriminate*) – also presented in the research conducted by De Wet (2004: 31) – is implicitly revealed through all the analysed lexicographical definitions of the word *racism* (as mentioned in the previous paragraph), for the very reason that the phenomenon ‘racism’ primarily deals with differences based on comparison by distinction. Compare, for example, “...that the members of other races are not as good as the members of your own ...” (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*); “...characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to each race ...” (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary*); “...different races have different qualities and abilities ...” (*Encarta World English Dictionary*); “... racial differences produce an inherent superiority ...” (*Merriam-Webster OnLine*); “... all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, qualities, etc., specific to that race ...” (*Oxford Talking Dictionary*); and “...asserting racial differences in character, intelligence, etc. and the superiority of one race over another ...” (*Webster's New World Dictionary & Thesaurus*).

But the (implicit) differences have to be explicated by action! Consequently – on the basis of the previous discussions – one could deduct that the concept DISCRIMINATION functions on a prototypical level to unveil the concept RACISM.

⁵ *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*; *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*; *Encarta World English Dictionary*; *Merriam-Webster OnLine*; *Oxford Talking Dictionary*; *Webster's New World Dictionary & Thesaurus*.

Consequently, a more fundamental investigation should turn the focus to the root, namely the verb *to discriminate*.

*Polysemous senses of the verb 'to discriminate'*⁶

An examination of the treatment of the polysemous⁷ senses of the verb *to discriminate* in four different dictionaries discloses a rather irregular semantic pattern. Within lexicographical practice there are three major ordering patterns for arranging these senses, namely on historical grounds; primary vs. secondary meanings; and empirical analysis (referring to the frequency of the relevant word's use).

The *Webster's New World Dictionary & Thesaurus* differentiates between the transitive and intransitive uses of the relevant verb, listing the senses respectively as follows:

1 v.t. to constitute a difference between; differentiate. v.t. 2 to recognize the difference between; distinguish. v.i. 1 to see the difference (between things); distinguish. v.i. 2 to be discerning. v.i. 3 to make distinctions in treatment; show partiality (in favor of) or prejudice (against).

The *Oxford Talking Dictionary* follows a similar model; compare:

1 v.t. Make or constitute a difference in or between; distinguish, differentiate. E17. 2 v.t. Distinguish with the mind; perceive the difference in or between. M17. 3 v.i. Make or recognize a distinction, esp. a fine one; provide or serve as a distinction; exercise discernment. L18. 4 v.i. Make a distinction in the treatment of different categories of people or things, esp. unjustly or prejudicially against people on grounds of race, colour, sex, social status, age, etc. L19.

The *Encarta World English Dictionary* also distinguishes three senses, but contrary to the previous dictionaries, puts the race-related sense first – consequently, and presumably, the primary sense according to this dictionary:

*1 intransitive verb **treat group unfairly because of prejudice**: to treat one person or group worse than others or better than others, usually because of a prejudice about race, ethnic group, age group, religion, or gender. 2 intransitive and transitive verb **discern difference**: to recognize or identify a difference • could not discriminate between red and green. 3 intransitive verb **be aware of differences**: to pay attention to subtle differences and exercise judgment and taste.*

⁶ This article will only be concerned with race-related discrimination.

⁷ "(H)aving multiple meanings: the existence of several meanings for a single word or phrase" – according to *Encarta World English Dictionary*.

The *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal* (Dutch Dictionary) distinguishes two senses, and in accordance with the *Encarta World English Dictionary*, considers the race-related sense to be the primary one:

1 discriminatie toepassen ten opzichte van, niet gelijk behandelen: de Chinezen in Maleisië voelen zich gediscrimineerd. 2 tussen twee gelijkende voorwerpen onderscheiden: een microscoop met een uitstekend discriminerend vermogen.

First recorded uses of the basic senses of the verb *to discriminate* and the noun *racism*

When we examine the first recorded uses of certain senses of the verb to discriminate and the noun racism from a historical point of view, some uncertainty arises regarding whether a race-related sense of the verb to discriminate should be regarded as the primary one; compare the following historical facts in connection with different senses, according to the Oxford Talking Dictionary:

- ☞ The first recorded use of the word *discriminate* occurred between 1600 and 1629.
- ☞ The first recorded use of a race-related sense of the verb *to discriminate* occurred between 1870 and 1899.
- ☞ The first recorded use of the word *racism* occurred between 1930 and 1969.

Distinction between the basic senses of the verb *to discriminate*

The previous analysis suggests that a distinction should be drawn between two basic senses of the verb *to discriminate*. The first sense relates to a basic conceptual action which determines categorisation, something we do when we become aware of the difference *in* or *between* entities, and something we do when we “distinguish with the mind” (*Oxford Talking Dictionary*). It is important to notice the use of the prepositions *in* and *between* in this description. In this regard the verb *to discriminate* entails the practice of categorisation, the most fundamental conceptual experience in thought, perception, action and speech, according to Lakoff (1987: 5), and explicated by him as follows:

*Every time we see something as a kind of thing ... we are categorizing.
Whenever we reason about kinds of things ... we are employing categories.*

The second (race-related) sense refers to actions or attitudes involving the prepositions *for* or *against*, as described by the *Webster's New World Dictionary* & *Thesaurus* as “show partiality (*in favor of*) or prejudice (*against*)”.

The relationship between the basic senses of the verb *to discriminate* and the concept RACISM

The previous distinction links with different approaches discussed by Gullestad (2004: 177-203) with regard to the definition of racism. She examines two anthropologists' definitions of racism as applied to contemporary Norwegian

society. Relevant to this discussion is the view of Inger-Lise Lien (1996 – as mentioned by Gullestad, 2004), and the way in which Lien (Lien, 1997 – as discussed in Gullestad, 2004: 185-186) sees it according to Miles' (1989) definition, in differentiating between the concepts RACIALISATION and RACISM: "While racialization is a natural cognitive process, racism is a negative continuation of that process."

The concept RACIALISATION relates to the first basic sense of the verb *to discriminate*, referred to in the previous paragraph, while the concept RACISM entails the second primary sense of the relevant verb.

In this respect, Gullestad (2004: 186) has serious doubts whether the fact that people merely notice differences (the cognitive process referred to as *racialisation*, for instance black and white skin color), can be considered a natural cognitive process. She postulates:

Interpretations of differences are not universal, but emerge in historically specific processes as human beings give meaning to what goes on around them. When some physical features appear as particularly visible, it is not only due to the features themselves, but to historically specific frames of interpretation that have become self-evident and self-explanatory for many people. Visibility, in the sense of prominent features that are invested with particular meanings, is not natural and universal but is historically specific and culturally produced and reproduced through fleeting and shifting negotiations.

This observation relates to MacLaury's (1991: 59) viewpoint that the selective emphasis on the prototype choice (of a category) is determined by vantage point – therefore also extended to a certain cultural frame; as a result "(d)ifferent individuals place importance on distinct attributes of the members of a category. Consequently, they select different members as prototypical, they rank members at different values, and they contract or dilate a category to different extents". This phenomenon is also evident when a paradigm (category) is conceptually reduced to such an extent that it results in stereotyping, "a conventional idea associated with a word, which might well be inaccurate", according to Lakoff (1987: 168). Stereotyping usually underlies the act of discrimination on a racial basis, and as such leads to prejudiced imprints.

A racial imprint

The views of both Gullestad and MacLaury tie in with one of the fundamental findings in cognitive linguistics, namely the fact that many (abstract) concepts relate to image schemas, which are preconceptual gestalts within the cognitive unconscious. They are acquired by way of our bodily experience of the physical world we live in. Repeated experiences of related spatial and force phenomena create these gestalts – gestalts that are linguistically manifested. Compare how the **container** image schema enables us to talk of both concrete and abstract containers: *in the box* vs. *in trouble*. One of our very basic spatial experiences

relates to proximity, and the schema that is based on this experience, is called the **proximity** schema. With regard to the nature of the **proximity** schema, Botha (2001: 59) postulates:

Human entities exist in a certain space at a certain point in time. And spatio-temporal cognisance implies identity. The co-ordinates of existence, i.e. identity, space and time, involve, inter alia, vantage point, viewpoint, perspective and orientation, as well as an explicit or implicit knowledge of these spatial/perceptual variables at a certain point in time. But conceptual awareness of these variables presupposes a certain alignment in relation to external reference points: spatial, temporal, or to other identities in space and time. Deictic expressions as such are manifestations of this reference-point and alignment competence. Furthermore, the proximity image schema acts as a preconceptual base in order to link these reference points.

In view of the experience of proximity, one has – on a more abstract and preconceptual level – a *closer* relationship to comforting entities and situations, and a *more distant* relation to discomfoting entities and situations. In this regard Taylor (1995: 134) maintains that the “degree of emotional involvement and the possibility of mutual influence are understood in terms of proximity”.

Against this background one can assume that in a country like South Africa, where an official (racist) policy of apartheid was created and maintained for almost fifty years, the **proximity** schema had an important influence on many individuals’ categorical (group) development. Legislation based on racial segregation enabled this principle – with its *closer to*, as well as its *more distant* experiences – to be manifested in the social lives of individuals, to such an extent that one can easily speak of the existence of a racial imprint in the cognitive set-up of both black and white people. The fact that De Wet’s (2004: 28-37) research reveals that both black and white people still experience racism in education, in spite of the stipulations of the Constitution and efforts to build a non-racial society, in some sense supports this view. Merely judged on perception, one notices a big difference between the way adults and children have come to accept each other on the basis of race since 1994. Children of different racial backgrounds tend to be more adaptable, and although most adults really persist in efforts to maintain good racial relations, the undertones of racism are very often perceived in potential stereotyping situations triggered by emotional incentives.

The previous assumption also depends on another basic mental phenomenon, namely the way in which we construe meaning in a subjectivised or objectivised way. Langacker (1990: 7) explains that an “entity construed subjectively is implicit and hence non-salient ... whereas the objectively-construed entity is salient by virtue of being placed *onstage* as the focus of attention.” In this regard it needs to be mentioned that children (in South Africa) at present experience the concept of race in a more subjectivised way, to such an extent that they are presumably mostly unaware of the fact that strict conceptual boundaries for the category ‘race’ could exist. Contrary to this categorical experience, adults’ views may still be objectivised in many instances – in other words they accept, but they

are still very aware of firm differences based on a developed prejudiced view. Such an attitude is very often revealed by emotional experiences of some kind – experiences that relate to category membership. These different experiences and manifestations of racism (or non-racism) disclose a historical dimension of a domain as one of the elements of a domain matrix against which the concept RACISM is understood within the specific community.

The awareness of race on the basis of the above-mentioned experiences relates to the concepts RACIALISATION and RACISM. Racialisation implies a subjectivised experience of race, while racism entails an objectivised experience of race, adding (stereotyped, on account of preconceptual schemas – and the experience of a historical dimension of a specific domain) values to differences.

Taking this view into account, and with regard to the fact that the word *racism* – as implicated by the dictionary definitions – embraces many kinds of discriminatory actions, it becomes imperative to investigate the nature of the blend of different concepts within the relevant word.

The concept RACISM as a conceptual blend

Adding a value to a category

The concept RACISM implies a conceptual blend⁸ of many different kinds of explicit or implicit actions. The primary action that reveals racism is exemplified by the verb *to discriminate*. Examination of the dictionary meanings of this verb reveals two basic senses:

Firstly, it means to categorise, to apply boundaries in order to place different kinds of entities in different kinds of paradigms on account of certain differentiating criteria. Such a mental action is a normal conceptualising action.

The second sense involves the experience of another kind of mental action that blends with the first one: to add a value to the relevant category. Should this value be based on racial criteria, one could consider it to be a racist intent. But values as such derive from different conceptual blends from diverse domains that involve historical, cultural, social, personal and many other kinds of variables. When Gullestad (2004: 186) mentions “interpretation”, she actually merges two conceptual operations: categorising is the first mental operation; adding a value to the category constitutes a next operation. She only mentions the second one.

As mentioned previously, our ability to categorise is the most fundamental mental process in making sense of the world we live in, or giving meaning to what we experience. To add a value to a category is just one of many cognitive (also blending) mechanisms we use to manoeuvre a category conceptually. Other mechanisms, *inter alia*, involve establishing the prototype or prototype schema of

⁸ Coulson and Oakley (2000:176) point out that conceptual blending (also known as *conceptual integration*) involves “the creative construction of meaning in analogy, metaphor, counterfactuals, concept combination and even in the comprehension of grammatical constructions”.

a category, determining the resemblance of other category members to the prototype, and to highlight or weaken the boundaries of a category.

The practice of racism

Apart from the implication of discriminating (differentiating) actions – thus: conceptual processes – many monolingual dictionaries also accentuate the polysemous nature of the word *racism* by suggesting an act and also a resulting effect as part of its meaning; compare: “... the resulting unfair treatment of members of other races ...” (*Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*); “... any program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation, etc., specif., such a program or practice that upholds the political or economic domination of one race over another or others” and “feelings or actions of hatred and bigotry toward a person or persons because of their race” (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary*); and “discrimination, or antagonism based on this” (i.e. belief) (*Oxford Talking Dictionary*).

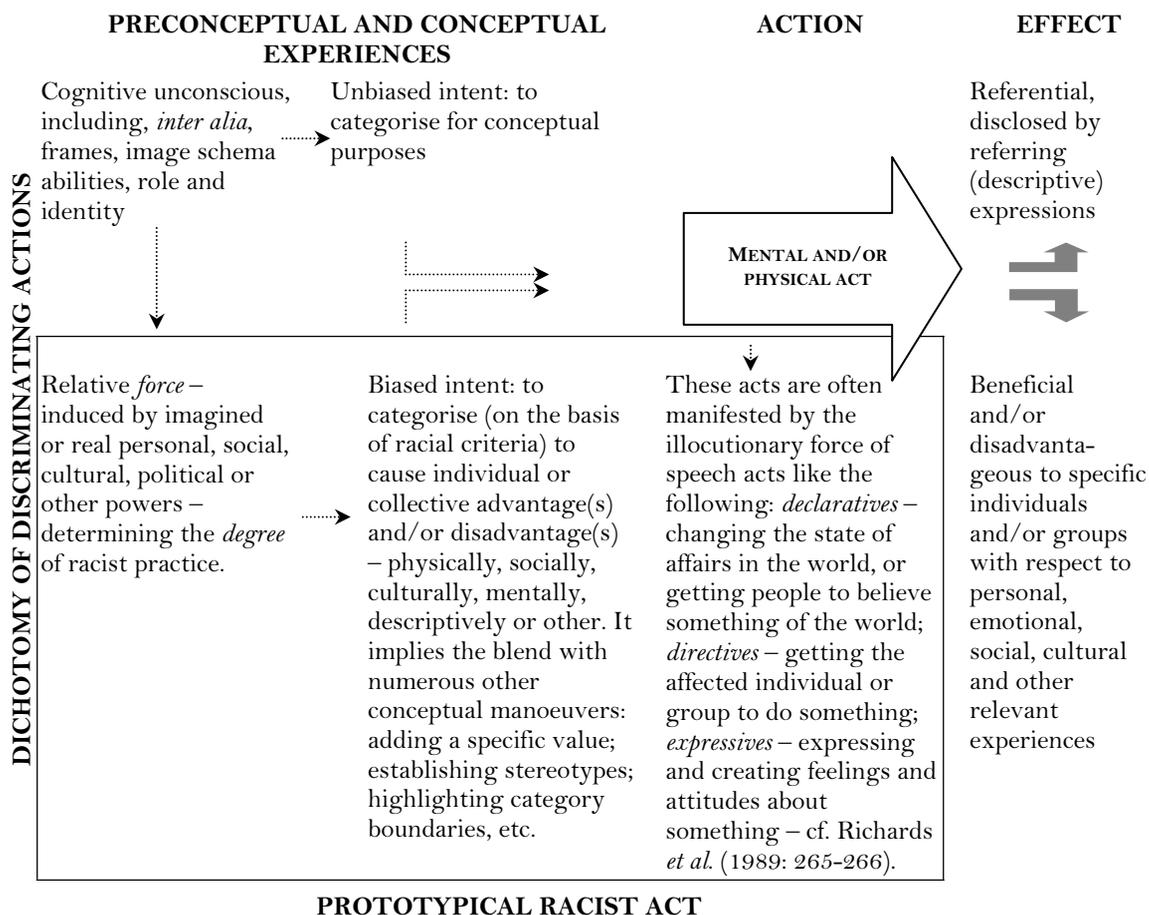
In this regard, the act of discrimination (racism, contrary to racialisation) entails a whole range of diverse actions. Pertaining to the practice of racism we can therefore accentuate two variables that determine the degree of racist practice. Labelling racism on account of this criterion (the relative effect of racism), relates to the traditional eclectic distinction that is made with regard to the status of the individuals who practice racism and/or to the context it has an effect on, namely institutionalised (structural), non-institutionalised (individual) and cultural racism.

The first variable involves the way in which one manoeuvres a category conceptually on account of a racial criterion. This will determine the degree of racism one practices. Stereotyping is an example of such a manoeuvre. In such cases prejudice – perhaps on account of isolated experiences – may play a dominant role. The outcome in such instances may be mild or severe, depending on the status of the racist practitioner or the nature and intensity of the speech act accompanying the racist intent. Should it be racist legislation, like in apartheid South Africa, the racist outcome is very harsh. But even without legislation, stereotyping by a head of state could have a very intense outcome. The way in which racial boundaries are conceptualised, is another intensifying factor. While apartheid South Africa was an example of the application of the strict-boundary-principle, post-apartheid South Africa is not without it. Many commentators argue that affirmative action, black empowerment, and even transformation as such, rest on this principle – exemplifying it with an incident when a minister (of sport) explicitly stated that “ethnic blacks” should be the ones who should benefit the most by affirmative action. Consequently they consider it to be a racist action. And if people are, again, classified racially for the purpose of affirmative action, one has to view such an action to be somewhere on the continuum between racialisation and racism (racialism).

The second variable entails the relative power that one has access to determining the degree of racism one can practice. Legislative power and the way in which it is executed would obviously be the most vigorous mechanisms for the intensity of

racist practices. Apartheid South Africa was a good example of such authoritative racist practices – even in linguistic disguise, using synonyms like *separate development*, *pluralism*, etc. to give a milder image to the concept. Judging by the views of different commentators with regard to post-apartheid South Africa, one gets the impression that, in many instances, the practice of racism at present goes in the disguise of words and phrases like *affirmative action*, *black empowerment*, *black ethnicity* – and even *transformation*. What one has to take cognisance of is the fact that the specific word that is used can have a weakening or strengthening effect on the impression of the action it refers to. A very interesting phenomenon in this regard is revealing itself at present. Although the government is predominantly black and the ruling party (the ANC) comes from a black freedom movement, and they are the people who have the power to apply transformation with all its implications, they still accuse white people of racism, while many white people accuse the rulers of racism, owing to the discriminating practices of transformation, affirmative action, black empowerment, implementation of quota systems, creating a work force which will represent the demographic image of the country, etc. – which they not only have the power to practice, but which they are allowed to do under the jurisdiction of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution (which will be referred to further on). This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that many smaller domains of empowerment are still controlled by white people – white people who are still in managerial positions, white people who still have economic and financial power, white people who still have educational power, etc., although the public realm is not a white public space any more (to use the words of Gullestad, 2004: 187).

Against the background of the previous discussion, the following model represents a prototypical act of racism on account of the distinction between racialisation and racism.



PROTOTYPICAL RACIST ACT

Figure 1: Prototypical discriminating act, constituting either racialisation or racism

The breakdown represented by the previous discussion and diagram indicates that the concept RACISM, as the manifestation of an act of discrimination, is not always clear-cut. One should be well aware of the fact that the concept DISCRIMINATION has two very distinctive senses – in a neutral sense as a categorising mechanism; and in an attitude/belief-disclosure sense as an offensive mechanism. But these two senses are not always very detached. If one looks at the way in which people conceptualise the concept RACISM on account of its discriminative nature, one realises that the conceptual boundaries between the two previously mentioned senses are very fuzzy. Depending on the context and the awareness of the stigma attached to racism, a mere neutral act of discrimination (racialisation) could, for instance, be judged as an inconsiderate form of racism. In this regard Gullestad (2004: 189) refers to the use of “ethnic markers” within the Norwegian society – well meant by “well educated parts of the population” – considered to be a kind of

racist practice. She quotes the research of Hernes and Knudsen (1990) in which they found that “nine out of ten majority Norwegians reserve the use of the word *immigrant* for people who have what is perceived to be a ‘dark skin color’”.

Another complicating factor with regard to the blend between the concepts RACIALISATION and RACISM manifests itself within post 1994 South African society. It involves the issue of morality⁹ as regards the transformation of the South African society on account of discriminative practices to bring about an equal society. For that reason the South African Constitution¹⁰ explicitly deals with the “racism-relevant” concept EQUALITY, which is formulated as follows:

1. *The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race¹¹, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.*
2. *No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.*
3. *Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.*

Although the principle of fair discrimination is also accepted in other communities, for instance the Dutch community – in which case it is called “positieve discriminatie” (positive discrimination) – the essence of the problem lies in the principle itself, as it is reflected by the adjectives *fair* and *unfair* and the noun *discrimination* with regard to the practices of racism. Another complicating factor with regard to the adjective *fair* involves the fact that the experience of its meaning reflects the conceptualiser’s moral judgement on account of a certain metaphorical fairness model (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1999: 297). With regard to the model of equality of distribution, Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 297) rightly emphasise the complexity of the fairness concept in the following words:

[T]here are a myriad of cases in which people generally agree on the necessity of some procedural rules of distribution, but find at times that following those ‘fair’ procedures results in a distribution of goods or opportunities that conflicts with their sense of rights-based fairness or equality of distribution fairness. In such cases there is typically no overarching neutral conception of fairness that can resolve the conflict of values.

⁹ The limitations of this article do not allow dealing with racism in relation to morality. Compare Botha (2005) for a discussion of morality issues within the current South African society.

¹⁰ Act 108 of 1996: *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996, Chapter 1: Bill of Rights, p. 7.

¹¹ This paper is only concerned with the concept RACE.

Conclusion

As starting point, the analysis in the previous discussion focussed on some lexicographical definitions of the word *racism*. On semasiological grounds it was found that the word *discrimination* by way of specialisation functions as a sense extension of the more general sense of the word *racism*. But due to the polysemous nature of the word *discrimination*, two senses of *discrimination* can be distinguished, namely the more neutral sense of categorising, and a sense that blends with the first: adding a value to the relevant category. These senses relate to a distinction drawn between the words *racialisation* and *racism*.

But the nuances of racism in the blend between *racialisation* and *racism* are diverse. People's judgment of an act of racism, therefore, frequently relates to the way they understand these concepts pertaining to its linguistic use, its relevant communicative, social and moral implications, but also as a result of their judgment of the beneficial and/or disadvantageous effects it has on individuals or groups, implicitly measured against discrimination as a prototypical act of racism. These actions result from the fact that (especially in the present South African context) the concept RACISM groups together a series of semantically related words¹² like *affirmative action*, *black empowerment*, *black ethnicity*, *transformation* and others which are firstly profiled against the stipulations of fair discrimination (within the South African constitution) as the base.¹³ On another level, the individual awareness of discrimination results from the fact that it is conceptualised against different domains which overlap and interact in various and intricate ways (cf. Taylor, 2002: 196/7). Consequently, individual judgment will very often determine many different readings of the sense of the relevant concept.

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¹² This view represents an onomasiological approach to meaning.

¹³ Knowledge of a concept consists in knowledge of the profile against the appropriate base (cf. Taylor, 2002:192-194).

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The non-use of African languages in education in Africa¹

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When using their language, in addition to communicating this (partial) knowledge, speakers also draw upon, most of the time unconsciously, their entire knowledge system, including its several often competing ideologies. (Dirven, Frank and Ilie in the introduction to Language and ideology Vol 2, 2001).

Introduction

Africa has a long history of conference resolutions and declarations in support of using African languages in education.

A document of the African Academy of Languages (Acalan, 2002: 9-10) lists the following meetings held to promote African languages:

- ☞ 1969: The Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers
- ☞ 1975: The Final Report of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Practices in Africa (Accra, Ghana)
- ☞ 1976: The Cultural Charter for Africa Adopted by the OAU (Port-Louis, Mauritius)
- ☞ 1986: The OAU Conference of African Ministers of Culture (Port-Louis, Mauritius)
- ☞ 1997: The Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe)
- ☞ 1999: The Programme of Action of the Decade of Education (Harare, Zimbabwe)

In addition to these, one can also include the following conference resolutions:

- ☞ 1996: Pan-African Seminar on the Problems and Prospects of the Use of African National Languages in Education (Accra, Ghana)
- ☞ 2000: The Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures (Asmara, Eritrea)
- ☞ 2000: The First International Conference On African Languages (Maseno, Kenya)
- ☞ 2002: The Second International Conference on The Role of African languages in Education, Science and Technology (Hammanskraal, South Africa)

¹ Paper presented in a panel discussion on *Language Policy in Education: Local Experiences in a Global Context* at the conference of the African Studies Association on *The Power of Expression: Identity, Language, and Memory in Africa and the Diaspora*. New Orleans, 14 November 2004.

As an illustration of the views and convictions of African leaders concerning the essential role of African languages in education, one can consider the following quotes from the 1996 Ghana declaration:

The 1996 Ghana declaration (Charter 1996), accepted by “African Ministers and those Responsible for Education in the African States” included statements such as the following:

[The meeting was aware of] the universal principle that the learner learns best in his mother tongue or most familiar language, the dignity and worth of each and every one of our mother tongue languages, and their complete inevitability as instruments of African education, culture and personality development, and that full literacy in and a full understanding of these national languages is a human right to be attained within a multilingual educational system appropriate to the socio-economic and socio-linguistic situation of a country. In this respect, it affirms the right of every African to literacy and education in his mother tongue, this being defined as the language native to the individual or the prevailing language of his immediate community.

To realise this right, the charter proposes that national awareness campaigns be held “for the removal of prejudices and the development of positive attitudes towards African mother tongue teaching and learning and community and national usage”; that “teachers and literacy personnel be mobilised and trained for teaching of and in the mother tongue languages, upgrading of their teacher status, and providing incentives for their work”; and that legislation be passed “for guaranteeing the use of mother tongue languages as the primary instruments for government business and administration within our countries” (Charter 1996).

Similarly, the 1997 Harare Declaration (by “an intergovernmental conference of ministers on language policies in Africa, organised by UNESCO with the co-operation of the Organisation of African Unity”), “having given due consideration to the views and recommendations of 51 government experts” declared their “total commitment to the realisation of ... policy measures directed at realising their vision for Africa”, which, they stated (Harare Declaration 1997):

- ☞ *[wants to operate] within a broader context of justice, fairness and equity for all; respect for linguistic rights as human rights, including those of minorities;*
- ☞ *acknowledges (Africa’s) ethno-linguistic pluralism and accepts this as a normal way of life and as a rich resource for development and progress;*
- ☞ *seeks to promote peaceful coexistence in a society where pluralism does not entail replacement of one language or identity by another, but instead promotes complementarity of functions as well as co-operation and a sense of common destiny;*
- ☞ *provides the environment for the promotion and preservation of an African identity as well as the cultivation of a proud and confident African personality, [and]*

☞ [conducts] *scientific and technological discourse in the national languages as part of cognitive preparation for facing the challenges of the next millennium.*

The Harare Declaration ends with a precise Plan of Action that lists specific activities (e.g. teaching of local, sub-regional and regional languages), objectives (using these languages as media of instruction and teaching them) and targeted results (the mastery of knowledge and know-how, and the development of skills and identity).

Equally, the Asmara declaration on African languages and literatures (Asmara Declaration 2000) declared that, “at the start of a new century and millennium, Africa must ... affirm a new beginning by returning to its languages and heritage”. “All African children”, it continues, “have the unalienable (sic) right to attend school and learn in their mother tongues. Every effort should be made to develop African languages at all levels of education. The effective and rapid development of science and technology in Africa depends on the use of African languages, and modern technology must be used for the development of African languages.”

Despite all these clear and precise recommendations and demonstrations of dedication to a cause, very little has changed regarding the use of African languages in education.² In some African states, says Bamgbose (2004), the mother tongue is used even less than before, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, South Africa and Zambia. The ex-colonial languages are still strongly preferred as media of instruction. In South Africa, despite the fact that it has declared nine African languages as national official languages in its constitution, these languages, in the main, still are low-function languages, used only for social interaction in private and personal domains, and in religious and cultural practice. They are deemed inappropriate for use in higher functions such as education, legislation and public debate and are still seriously subordinated and minoritised. In fact, they still have very little economic or political value. This is apparent from the lack of interest in studying them at tertiary level. Despite the fact that 35.4 million of South Africa’s 45 million people are speakers of Bantu languages, student numbers in departments of African Languages at universities have dropped alarmingly. According to a report by Gill Moodie in a Sunday newspaper, the *Sunday Times*, of 25/4/04, “students studying African languages (at the University of the Western Cape) have fallen from 1900 a decade ago to fewer than 100 today”. At Unisa (Prof. Louis Louwrens, personal communication), where 1 300 to 1 600 first-language students were registered for the study of Northern Sotho in the early 1990s, the number dropped to nine in 2004, and the figure of 511 postgraduate students in 1997 dropped to 53 in 2001. At the University of Pretoria, the postgraduate enrolment dropped from 177 in 1995 to 87 in 2003, and on the Soweto and East Rand campuses of the former Vista

² In fact, as Kashoki (1993:6) points out: at a Commonwealth conference held at Makerere University in Uganda in 1961, a recommendation was accepted to “retreat from African languages” as media of instruction (MoI) and as subjects of study, and to use English as MoI and as subject of study “right from the start”.

University, no students enrolled for these languages at undergraduate levels in 2004. The situation is also reflected in the publishing industry: of the 40 057 books published in South Africa in the period 1990-1998, only 4 359 appeared in the Bantu languages (Rall & Warricker, 2000: 21).

The question one has to ask is: why? Why have all these declarations and resolutions had almost no impact on African governments? Why does it seem as if these governments have not been prepared to promote African languages in meaningful ways? Why have these resolutions made no difference to the fate of African languages in education?

There, most probably, are several reasons for this situation. I should like to mention the following six:

Firstly, there may be an impression among policy decision makers that the case for using African languages in education is not supported by scientific and empirical evidence.

This, of course, is not true, as can easily be shown with reference to the findings of internationally known research projects such as the Six-Year Primary Project of the University of Ife in Nigeria (Bamgbose, 1984) the work of Eddie Williams (1996) regarding reading in English and in indigenous languages in primary schools in Malawi and Zambia in 1996, and the findings of the Working Group on Educational Research and Policy Analysis (1997) on languages of instruction. Outside Africa there is the work of Hornberger in Peru on Quechua (1987), and Thomas and Collier in the USA (1997), whose work involved 700 000 language-minority pupils in five large urban and suburban school districts in various regions of the United States.

A second reason could be that policy decision makers regard the language issue as a “soft issue”, as something that is of importance “only” in relation to human and cultural rights, and that there are many more serious and pressing problems of national importance, such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, crime, housing and social security services.³ What they do not understand is that language is a fundamental factor that underlies these problems as well as problems such as poor educational development, poor public administration and service delivery and poor economic performance, and that attempts to resolve any of these problems also need to address the language factor.

A third possible reason is that bureaucratic decision makers regard multilingual policies (through which African languages are promoted) as too expensive to implement, and as requiring time, effort and expertise that are not readily available. In addition, they probably think that such policies are not practicable. A good illustration of this reality comes from my own experiences involving a research project that aimed to demonstrate, on theoretical and empirical grounds,

³ An illustration of the low ranking of language in public life in South Africa is the fact that 80% of the complaints about transgressions of the country’s constitutional language stipulations that are received by the Pan South African Language Board, a government-supported institution tasked with monitoring the implementation of official multilingualism in South Africa, are directed against government departments.

that the use of Northern Sotho, one of South Africa's official languages, as medium of instruction in teaching Industrial Electronics in a vocational college will lead to better knowledge, understanding and skills development among learners, and ultimately have economic advantages. The project had the support of both the South African minister of education and the deputy minister of education, yet could not obtain the support of the department – not on the grounds of the project's research design or the policies of the Department of Education, but because they argued that they could not provide the administrative support that the project required.

Fourthly, globalisation and technologisation also explain the continued low standing of African languages. Globalisation, as we know, refers to the worldwide control of “the processes of production and consumption, and the consequent flows of capital”, the distribution of information and the spread of particular values, norms, patterns of behaviour, beliefs, views and life-styles (Swann *et al.*, 2004: 125). As is known, the language of globalisation and technologisation is mainly English⁴ and this has meant that English has become more powerful over the past 15 years and that African languages have become more marginalised and disempowered.

A fifth possible (but rather sensitive) reason for the failure of African governments to promote African languages may be that politicians and bureaucratic leaders are concerned only with their own interests, and consequently allow language policy practices to develop that exclude the masses from access to the rights and privileges that they themselves enjoy, thus protecting their own interests. In South Africa, persons who are not adequately proficient in “proper” English (i.e. more than 50% of the population), struggle to participate and compete in public affairs, and so remain at a disadvantage. English acts as a gate-keeper, a separator, an exclusionary mechanism, an instrument to protect the interests of those in control, who know English well. This tendency, which Myers-Scotton (1983) calls “elite closure”, is generally found among the Westernised middle classes, who are mainly concerned with their own wealth and not the real interests of the underprivileged. Included in this elite in South Africa are community leaders such as the members of school governing bodies.

A final, more serious explanation for the non-promotion of African languages relates to colonialism.

Two or three centuries of colonialism have led to the imposition of European values, norms, beliefs, practices, life-styles and so forth on the people of Africa, that is, the replacement of African cultural identity. In South Africa (and probably elsewhere as well) this process of domination and subjugation has resulted in the perception that indigenous cultural values, beliefs, patterns of behaviour, and so on are inferior, because of the enforcement of the coloniser's views about what is

⁴ Gassner (2002) reports that 80% of the world's information is stored in English, and 68.4% of its available websites are in English, 5.8% are in German, 3% in French and 2.4% in Spanish.

valuable, how people should behave, and what their aspirations should be.⁵ Colonialism defines Africans as “the other”, and alienates them from themselves, and that, says Bokamba (1994), can lead to the destruction of the African identity. Furthermore, says Smolicz (date unknown), colonisation has dysfunctional effects, endangering the “integrity, creative powers and the ability to sustain (the) intellectual effort” of the communities concerned.

Languages play an important part in de- and re-culturalisation, themselves becoming, as Pennycook (2002) points out, inferiorised and marginalised, entering into a-symmetric power relations with the ex-colonial languages and developing negative social meanings, thus contributing to the development of peoples’ negative self-concepts, a break-down of self-confidence and a negative sense of self-worth.⁶

This process, I believe, is the main reason why African governments do not promote African languages. They do not believe that African languages are suitable instruments for use in high-function contexts, as Hornberger (1987) also found among the speakers of Quechua in Peru.

If African languages are to be promoted in Africa, these beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards them will have to be changed, particularly among political, bureaucratic and community leaders.

What can we as language planning scholars do?

The opinion is sometimes expressed that the types of problems mentioned above would be adequately addressed if African countries were to establish effective democracies and governments were to rule in transparent, accountable and responsible ways. This is the type of governance that is developing in South Africa, an emerging liberal democracy, guided by one of the finest constitutions in the world. However, the democratising process, though impressive, has not contributed meaningfully to change in linguistic behaviour in the country; on the contrary: public life in South Africa has become increasingly monolingual and African languages have, arguably, become more marginalised.

The solution to the problem of the non-promotion of African languages must be sought elsewhere.

The following strategies can be considered:

Language planning scholars must provide policy decision makers with information about the role of language in public life.

Except for the negative effects of globalisation, over which language planning scholars have little control, the reasons (for the non-promotion of African

⁵ Bourdieu (quoted by Hasnain, 2003) calls colonialism “symbolic domination”, that is “the ability of certain social groups to exercise control over others by establishing their view of reality, their norms, ... and their cultural practices as the most valued ones.”

⁶ Incredibly, African leaders have played a role in this process of inferiorisation by insisting on the use of an ELWC in public contexts and public statements to the effect that African languages are “a waste of time”.

languages) referred to in the previous section are the result of a lack of information or of erroneous perceptions and beliefs. Language planning scholars should therefore provide policy decision makers and persons responsible for policy implementation with information about the following four issues, at least, stating:

(a) That language is a fundamental factor in:

- ☞ the cognitive, affective and social development (literacy, numeracy, higher-level skills, values, beliefs, the ability to work effectively in teams, etc.) of individuals (learners). In this regard it needs to be emphasised that the use of learners' first language in formal education is vital during the first three or four years, at least, in order to enable learners to develop their cognitive, affective and social skills and to develop a sense of their affective and social roots. Neglect of a learner's first language is even said to lead to the destruction of his or her productive and creative powers;
- ☞ promoting the economic, educational, political, social and cultural development of communities;
- ☞ enhancing the active participation of all citizens in educational, economic, political and social public institutions;
- ☞ creating respect for human rights, promoting the peaceful coexistence of people, and the promotion and preservation of African identities;
- ☞ the protection and promotion of diversity in countries through the recognition of ethno-linguistic pluralism as a resource;
- ☞ the assertion of independence, national integration and the construction of African identity; and
- ☞ the intellectual development of a society through the promotion of scientific and technological discourse.

(b) That a multilingual language policy approach is essential in complexly multilingual countries and that the "traditional" single language policy approach to the resolution of societal problems has failed.

African governments hitherto have generally followed a single-language approach to the management of public affairs (including even education), seemingly believing (mistakenly) that economic development correlates negatively with linguistic and cultural diversity (that is, that multilingualism is a barrier to economic growth); that public administration is more effectively managed in a single language; and that national development (or modernisation) and national integration (or nation-building) will be better facilitated by the use of a single language. That single language is "obviously" an ex-colonial language. This approach is in line with language planning thinking in the early 1960s (see Ricento, 2000): that social, political and economic problems can be solved through the use of one "neutral" language and that multilingualism is a problem, hindering economic and political development. Scholars involved with language planning have shown, however, that language policies and plans developed within this framework have not been successful and have not resolved any of the serious problems, such as educational failure (high drop-out figures, low pass-rates, poor

literacy and numeracy levels); socio-economic inequality and marginalisation (increasing poverty – in South Africa 50% of the population live below the poverty line; a widening gap between rich and poor – in South Africa the top 15 million people earn 88% of the national income; unemployment – in South Africa the unemployment figure is 43%); cost-ineffective policy practices; and continued political instability and conflict. In fact, the single-language approach has led to greater dependency of African countries on the West than in the time of colonialism.

African countries have no choice: they must follow a multilingual policy approach.⁷

(c) That language and language policies can be used very effectively as instruments of control, coercion and manipulation.

It is necessary that language policy decision makers (as well as the public at large) be made aware of the fact that language is not an objective entity operating free of any contextual control and that the selection of an official language (as medium of instruction, language of the courts, language of public pronouncements, and so forth) may not be an “innocent” exercise that is made with reference only to considerations such as the linguistic capacity of a language and its national or international status.

Such a view of language policy and language policy practice is an illusion. Firstly, it obscures the potential of language policies to function as instruments of control and social manipulation, and, secondly, it obscures the fact that the linguistic behaviour of political and governmental leaders can be instruments for the retention of power, the promotion of structural control, the legitimisation of the dominant elite and the social ordering of a community into a hierarchical society. Phillipson (1992: 47), for example, mentions the use of dominant languages (such as English in South Africa – VW) for the “establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities”, Tollefson (2002: 77) talks of “the enormous power of language and language planning to shape public opinion, mobilize populations, and to define in concrete terms more abstract issues of power and control”, and Pennycook (2002: 24) points out that “language plays a highly significant role in the reproduction of inequality, as both object and medium of division”. As an example, he quotes the use of colonial language-in-education policies in oriental societies for preserving indigenous identities, thereby constructing “loyal citizens”. Phillipson (2000) also warns about the use of the language-in-education-policy in the USA which, he says, is directed at the cultural and linguistic assimilation of non-English learners. Koul and Devaki (2000: 114) show that school curricula in the British period in India (1813 – 1947) were directed at the establishment of “Western Philosophy, thought systems and scientific and technological developments”, and Annamalai (2003: 179-181) also demonstrates that education in India under British rule was directed at spreading

⁷ The important challenge to scholars involved with language planning is, of course, to define what such an approach entails and to demonstrate exactly how it should be implemented in real terms.

European knowledge and European values with the aim of “producing consenting citizens”. Societies can thus be regulated to serve the interests of their rulers.⁸

The manipulation of language, language policy development and language policy practice by the powerful to serve their own interests (called linguistic imperialism by Phillipson) can be either overt or covert. The overt use of language for purposes of control can be illustrated with reference to the use of language policy for obtaining, maintaining or strengthening political power by prohibiting the use of local languages in public domains, as happened in both South Africa and India (see Sonntag, 2002), and, earlier, in Wales and Ireland. Covert linguistic imperialism occurs through the (sole) use of one language by the international technological media and international publishing houses (for example by controlling the selection and distribution of information and by promoting a-symmetric patterns of communication), or when politically and economically powerful bodies marginalise languages through coercive administrative control, the control of a community’s human and natural resources, their consumer patterns and their recreational needs. In all these cases, the language of the dominant power is advanced and the languages of the (administratively, economically, politically and socially) dominated communities are marginalised.

In South Africa, the hierarchic (a-symmetric) power relations between the country’s main languages reflect social, structural and psychological hierarchies. Language (and language policy practice) seems to have replaced race as a socio-economic divider and is leading to increased inequality and the (re-)construction and (re-)organisation of human societies.

Language policy decision makers need to be aware of the use of language policy and language policy practice for purposes of control, and need to combat the hegemony of the former colonial languages. A decreased reliance on such former colonial languages must develop, the wide-spread negative attitudes towards African languages must be countered, and the status and prestige of African languages must be enhanced.

⁸ Kashoki (1993) points out that colonial governments demonstrated their support for the use of African languages in education at several conferences. He lists the following: The British Government’s “Education Policy in British Tropical Africa”, in which African languages were described as of primary importance in the education of the colonies (1925); a conference in 1927, on the “Place of the vernacular in Native education”, declared its support for African languages as media of instruction and as subjects of study; and the executive committee of the “International African Institute” (in Rome) which gave its support for the use of African languages in education (both as subjects of study and as MoI) in 1930. In fact, says Kashoki (1993:6), before the 1960s, British colonial language-in-education policies were “strikingly in favour of African languages”. On the surface these policy stances seem commendable, which makes post-colonial African governments’ unwillingness to promote African languages in public life even less understandable. It is also possible, though, that they may simply have been instruments of colonialism.

(d) That the of costs of a multilingual approach to the management of public life is not prohibitive

The issue of the costs of a multilingual approach to public management is generally presented in an uninformed and one-sided way. Grin (2002) demonstrates quite clearly that the addition of a (first) language as medium of instruction in formal education would not add more than 4-5% to the cost of any education budget. Cost estimates for the use of multilingual policies that were undertaken by the South African National Treasury and the Western Cape provincial government showed that the increased costs amount to 0.146% of the national budget and between 3-6% of the provincial budget respectively. Discussions on the cost factor in multilingual policy options is often (unfairly) limited to material costs.

Scholars engaged in language planning need to collaborate with one another.

Scholars who are involved with language planning (in African countries) need to collaborate with one another in order to produce a data-bank of validated information relevant to language planning and to make such information available in readily digestible formats. In order to accomplish such a task in a meaningful way it is self-evident that scholars involved in language planning research and development must establish contact (e.g. through computer networks) and share insights, experiences and information with each other. Computerised links thus need to be established between research centres such as the Centre for Language Studies (Malawi), Bakita (Tanzania), the Project for Alternative Education in South Africa (Praesa) at the University of Cape Town (South Africa), the Unit for Language Facilitation and Language Empowerment at the University of the Free State (South Africa) and the Centre for Research in the Politics of Language at the University of Pretoria (South Africa). Obviously, individual researchers and language practitioners need to be included in such a network. Links should also be established with state and semi-state institutions, such as, in the case of South Africa, the National Language Services of the Department of Arts and Culture, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) and the Provincial Language Committees. Very important in this regard is co-operating with the African Academy of African Languages (ACALAN), situated in Mali. Finally, it will also be useful to make contact with the Council of Europe regarding the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, and Unesco.

Scholars engaged in language planning need to continue with research on relevant issues.

Examples of issues that need serious research are:

1. The meaningfulness of pluralism. The quotes from the Harare Declaration (1997) above clearly state that it is necessary to “acknowledge (Africa’s) ethno-linguistic pluralism and accept this as a normal way of life and as a rich resource for development and progress”, and that “peaceful coexistence [should be promoted] in a society where pluralism does not entail

replacement of one language or identity by another, but instead promotes complementarity of functions as well as co-operation and a sense of common destiny". This means, firstly, that the role of multilingualism in national life needs to be demonstrated and what governments think about it needs to be changed by showing (as argued above) that a single-language approach does not solve any economic or educational problems, that such an approach has the potential for political and social instability, and that it increases the danger of control and coercion (through controlling the flow of information). Secondly, it needs to be demonstrated that language communities do not exist as separate entities but are linked to one another in relationships of co-dependence (the notion of ecolinguistics), and that one language community depends for its meaningful existence on the other communities in the linguistic ecosystem.

2. The practical implementation of multilingualism. This implies that researchers ask what, exactly, is meant by the notion "multilingualism/multilingual education", precisely how such a policy will work in real-life situations (such as the multilingual classrooms of Gauteng in South Africa), what needs to be done to make it effective and how much it will cost.
3. Changing language attitudes (restoring self-esteem and (re-)constructing a positive sense of African identity). In this regard, several features of (language) attitudes need to be taken into consideration, namely:

- ☞ That attitudes, being deep-seated affective entities and dispositions that determine behaviour, should be clearly distinguished from opinions
- ☞ That attitudes are the result of people's life-long experiences, and can therefore really only be changed through new experiences
- ☞ That attitudes are not directly observable, but are inferred from behaviour
- ☞ That attitudes cannot be changed easily

In the long term, language attitudes can only be changed through positive experiences of the speakers of a particular language, for example, by experiencing these speakers as economically successful and socially prestigious, that is: that their languages have economic value (see Grin's (2002) distinction between private and social market and non-market value, including social and cultural capital).

In the short term, language attitudes may be addressed through using an approach I call cognitive therapy, that is: demonstrating to speakers in factual terms that their languages are not inferior and that they are thus not culturally or cognitively deprived in any way as a result of their languages, hoping, then, that changed thinking will lead to changed linguistic behaviour.

Scholars engaged in language planning must participate in the decision-making exercise

Globalisation, says Labrie (2000), has led, through the deregulation and the expansion of markets and the internationalisation of information through the development of communication technologies to a shift of power from politics to the economy, which means that national governments are losing their former

authority as independent decision makers. Many decisions relating to national issues are in effect made by economic powers and state control has become diluted. This has meant that the separation and the distance between the state, the private sector and civil society has diminished, and decision making is becoming a joint exercise. Decision making is no longer a linear, mechanistic exercise, and civil society, including researchers, can therefore play a role in decision making. Scholars engaged in language planning need to engage with policy decision makers in state departments. In South Africa, one of the chief conditions that must be met if linguistic transformation is to occur, arguably, is that senior decision makers need to adapt their frame of reference about the role of language in public life. As pointed out above, it is probably true that most decision makers in government see language policy as an issue that is concerned only with language as such, that is, with language as a right, with little significance for anything else. As language planning scholars we know that this is not true: language planning is ultimately about people and their general welfare. Policy decision makers in government need to work within a different frame of reference regarding language planning. To bring this about, extended communication needs to occur between language planning scholars and government officials.⁹

Civil society is also uninformed about language planning processes and the potential dangers of such policies and plans. They also have to be made aware of what is at stake and their support needs to be mobilised. An important role player in this regard is the labour union movement. Trade unions represent the workers, and the type of linguistic transformation we are debating is directly in their interest.

Conclusion

Scholars engaged in language planning can, probably, as argued above, make a difference. However, the role of language policy development and planning must not be over-estimated.

Developing a language policy as such will not necessarily change anything. This is apparent from the South African case: South Africa has constitutional language stipulations, is developing a national language policy (hopefully to be promulgated soon as the South African Languages Bill), has a government directorate responsible for language planning and terminological development, has established a national language board (PanSALB), as well as provincial language committees and national language bodies, has lexicographical units for each of the official languages and has a large number of non-governmental organisations directed at language maintenance and promotion, and yet African languages remain non-promoted. Linguistic transformation has not occurred in any meaningful way.

In addition, implementing language planning decisions – that is, changing people's linguistic behaviour – is very difficult. There are large numbers of

⁹ Wolff (2004) provides an important perspective on the need for the professional marketing of multilingual education.

variables that intervene in the planning and implementation processes and the societies in which changed linguistic behaviour has to be brought about are extremely complex, being deeply and complexly multilingual, and subject to strong economic and political forces.

Given these two considerations, it is clear that language planning (by definition: “from above”) must be complemented by a bottom-up approach: members of the speech communities to be affected by language planning efforts have to have the clear perception that their interests are catered for and that they are part of the process, “taking ownership” of it. If language planning activities do not have the support of communities, no linguistic transformation will take place.

Finally, any language planning initiatives need to be dealt with non-emotionally (and without aggression) and rationally – within a clear conceptual framework and on the basis of verified information. Furthermore, it has to be borne in mind that such initiatives cannot be expected to produce immediate results: in Africa, changing linguistic behaviour (through external intervention) presupposes changing self-esteem and negative attitudes, and reconstructing a positive sense of identity, and this may take as long as it took to create these negative psychic conditions – through slavery and colonialism over a period of several centuries.

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Overlapping and divergent agendas: Writing and applied linguistics research

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Applied linguistics and language pedagogy have as yet not been able to develop rich and authentic graded learning materials nor a systematic application of insights into rule presentation and internalisation systematising rules or rule complexes (Dirven in Pedagogical grammar, 1990).

Post-modern approaches

When aimed at the design of solutions to practical problems, especially in the so-called applied disciplines that concern themselves with human development, academic endeavour is characterised by a never-ending search for improvement and refinement. This is certainly true of applied linguistics, which in this contribution shall be defined as a discipline of design, concerning itself with the solution of language problems (cf. Weideman 1999; 2003a; 2003b). Though applied linguistics of course encompasses the design of solutions to all manner of language problems, historically its concerns have been dominated by problems related to language teaching and learning. Because most of my own experience lies in this sub-field of applied linguistics, the discussion below will refer mostly to that. This does not imply that other areas (cf. Davies, 1999, for a broad discussion) are not worthwhile, merely that the focus here will be limited mainly to the design of applied linguistic solutions to language learning and teaching problems, and not to the solution, for example, of lexicographical, forensic, translation or language management issues.

Over the years, applied linguistic work has been influenced by a number of traditions or approaches. These approaches determine the content and style, the what and the how of the solutions that are proposed (cf. Rajagopalan, 2004; Weideman, 2003a). Each of these traditions has generated not only its own style of research (cf. Brown, 2004), but also, and most importantly perhaps, its own research agenda. Each has made its own contribution to our understanding of the discipline, up to and including the current set of post-modern, critical approaches to applied linguistics (for a recent discussion, cf. Pennycook, 2004; 1989; 1994; 1999; Rampton, 1997). The contribution of a post-modern approach to our understanding of how we conceive of what constitutes responsible research, not only in applied linguistics in general, but also in research on writing in particular, lies mainly in its identification of the political forces that are at work in language practice (cf., too, Rampton, 1995): how power relations, and specifically unequal

power relations, that get embedded and institutionalised in organisational structures and arrangements, influence (and bedevil) such practice.

Critical applied linguistics is particularly concerned with the harm (or 'pain', as Pennycook, 2004: 797-798 terms it) that designed solutions, especially when institutionalised in organisational and other arrangements, can cause, and how we may eliminate or at least begin to compensate for such harm.

Post-modern approaches, of which critical applied linguistics is certainly the most prominent, critique these organisational arrangements specifically in respect of the structural or institutional inequalities and injustices that they first legitimate, and then help to reinforce. These approaches require that applied linguistic analyses account for the ways in which we structure, implement or arrange solutions to language problems. We leave aside for the moment the point of criticism of critical approaches themselves that is often made, viz. that there is not enough follow-through from such analyses to the point that they affect the designed solutions (cf. the concerns expressed by Lillis, 2003). Let me give a brief example of what such an analysis for the sake of accountability can achieve. If language learners are identified before arriving at an institution as possessing limited language proficiency, and such identification results in their being exposed to limited materials, hemmed in by lowered expectations, and provided with inferior levels of support (cf. Gebhard, 1999: 553), they are institutionally condemned to failure, since they are then getting exactly the opposite of what they need: a rich variety of materials, high expectations from teachers, and substantial institutional support. However much the learners themselves might intend to develop their language in order to improve their performance to the level required by the institution, the institutional arrangements that treat them as less proficient prevent them from doing so.

Having identified, through such analysis, the power relations that, instead of eliminating 'pain', cause it, the applied linguist should therefore, in (re)designing the solution to the language problem, take cognisance of the results of the analysis. Critical applied linguistics (or at least one variant of it – cf., again, Pennycook, 2004, for a discussion of four potentially different interpretations) is thus not satisfied merely by identifying the inequality. The analysis must result in changing or transforming the situation. In this emphasis, post-modern applied linguistics shares, with previous traditions and research in the field, the concern with improvement and refinement of our designed solutions to language problems that was referred to at the beginning of this discussion.

So far, not much has been said about writing, the second term referred to in the title. What approaches to writing, and to research in writing, do we find in the literature? The short answer is: more or less the same approaches that have, over time, informed applied linguistics. To a certain degree, this is to be expected: in the discussions of different approaches to writing that will be discussed here (Ivanic, 2004; Lillis, 2003), the research into writing is, in the first instance, directed at improving the teaching of writing and gaining an understanding of how we learn to write – much the same concerns as are in evidence in applied linguistics solutions to language learning and teaching problems in general. For

this observer, who came to this discussion in the first instance not as an expert on writing, but rather as an applied linguist more familiar with the design and development of language teaching and testing materials, the congruence appeared noteworthy and significant. There is a remarkable degree of similarity in the approaches adopted by each (for not dissimilar but slightly alternative views and systematisation, cf. Johns, 2005; Leki, 2002). The focus of this contribution, however, will be not only the overlap between the two fields (or sub-fields, but that is not our concern, since I do not wish to go into a debate about the relationship between the two, although I shall refer below to the absence of ‘writing’ from institutionalised applied linguistic discussion and a recent handbook). Rather, the focus will be on the interesting divergences in approach that we find when we compare the two endeavours.

What should be noted here, however, is that in a number of recent discussions, both of writing (Ivanic, 2004; Johns, 2005; Leki, 2002; Lillis, 2003) and of applied linguistics (Rajagopalan, 2004; Weideman 2003a), post-modern approaches achieve a prominence as being characteristic of current practice (and, if not yet characteristic, then at least as desirable). In the final section that sets out the conclusions reached in our analysis, we return to what appears to be the shared typifying feature of post-modern applied linguistics and writing research.

Purpose

The purpose of this discussion will therefore be to examine some recent expositions of approaches both to writing and to applied linguistics, and to see, first, where they converge, and next – perhaps more interestingly – where they differ. As the comparison and discussion will show, there may be pointers in such an analysis that happen to be beneficial to our continuing refinement of both of these fields.

The comparison should be interesting for another two reasons. First, in discussions of writing and approaches to writing, the terms “writing” and “applied linguistics” are sometimes used interchangeably, without problematising the relationship (if any) between the two. Second, in institutionalised applied linguistics, such as the lists of topics or themes that circumscribe applied linguistics, and are used by organisations such as AILA, the omission of the term “writing” is glaring. In the list of AILA scientific commissions given by Davies (1999: 19), “writing” does not occur at all.

An additional motivation for doing this comparison is that there is a singular lack of meta-discussion, i.e. a critical analysis of the various published discussions that provide a survey or overview of these fields. One may speculate about the reasons for this; one reason certainly is that to many applied linguists this is not real applied linguistic work, or perhaps too theoretical, or too far removed from the service orientation that is so typical of much work in the field. It is true, of course, that meta-analysis belongs to the philosophy of applied linguistics, and to the foundational work that underlies the discipline. But it is nonetheless worthwhile and necessary, and, as I hope to show below, illuminating.

Furthermore, as the analysis below will indicate, post-modern, critical approaches to writing deserve to be analysed critically on their own terms as well. How critical are current approaches to writing, for example, to the institutional settings that legitimate their own existence within the academic context? Is there a potential crisis for critical approaches in achieving the prominence and status that they currently enjoy (Billig, 2000)? How do they fare pedagogically when measured on their own terms?

Characterisations of approaches to writing

We will first discuss two characterisations of different approaches to writing, that found in Lillis (2003), and that of Ivanic (2004). Though Lillis's work is influenced substantially by that of Ivanic and others, and so can be expected to share many of the features of Ivanic's characterisation, which will be discussed below, my motivation for including her views lies in her interest in exploring the *design* features of especially critical approaches to writing. "Academic literacies' has proved to be highly generative as a critical research frame," she notes, "but as a design frame it has yet to be developed" (Lillis, 2003: 185). Her intention, in defining 'design' as the action of applying such critical analyses to teaching, is therefore wholly aligned with the definition of applied linguistics given above, and provides a first bridge between our understanding of writing research, on the one hand, and, on the other, applied linguistic endeavour. If research has no effect on pedagogical design, at least in the sense of providing a theoretical rationale for the designed solution, then it will have little interest for the applied linguist or, one presumes, for the designer of writing materials.

Both Lillis and Ivanic present their characterisations of different approaches to writing in schematic form, and this presentation makes them more immediately accessible. Drawing on earlier work by Ivanic and others, Lillis first tabulates the status of the approach (on a range from "dominant" to "oppositional"); then the theory of language underlying the approach; third, the student writing pedagogy that flows from this; and, finally, the educational goals (ranging from "monologic" to "dialogic" to "critical") associated with each approach. The defining characteristics of an approach seem to derive mainly from the second and third sets of distinguishing features, so for the purposes of the current analysis the essence of Lillis's diagrammatic representation (2003: 194: her Table 1) can therefore be further condensed as follows:

Table 1: Approaches to writing (Lillis, 2003)

Theory of language	Pedagogy
Language as autonomous system	Skills approach
Language as individual meaning	Creative self-expression
Language as discursive practices	Socialisation into these
Language as genres with features	Explicit teaching of these
Language as ideological practice	Challenging the <i>status quo</i>

Though Lillis’s intention is not to fall prey to a mere “dialectic” approach (2003: 195 *et seq.*) in which binary opposites are identified, but rather to adopt a “dialogic both/and” (2003: 199) approach, the whole discussion is interspersed with such opposites, especially in characterising the differences in status between what she calls the “dominant” discourse and the critical or “oppositional” framework. The following (Table 2) summarises some of the terminology employed to characterise the differences:

Table 2: Oppositions in the discourse (Lillis, 2003)

Dominant	Critical
conventional	imaginative
controlling	free, emancipatory, supportive
reproductive	new, future-oriented
homogeneous	heterogeneous
static	living
uncritical (single truth)	inconclusive
ossified	participative, valuing student perspective
abstract	contextual, supportive

The trouble with these characterisations, it seems to me, is the use of emotive terms to describe the position with which one does not agree. It is unavoidable, probably, that a presentation of the views of other theoretical viewpoints than one’s own may be coloured by prejudice. For the sake of fairness it is best, therefore, not to describe the viewpoints of the other in one’s own terms. To present a teacher with a choice of adopting either a deficit approach (cf. Kapp, 2004: 246) that is at the same time distant, authoritative, clinical, cold, impersonal, conflict-generating, and rigid, or one that promotes warmth, personal concern, fulfilment, the development of an own true self and identity, and which may nurture the harmonious, spiritual, emotive and poetic, may not be entirely fair, since it leaves little choice.

But what if we take the critical stance that Lillis adopts on its own terms? She is entirely in agreement with Bakhtin’s statement (Lillis, 2003: 198) that “[n]othing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word ... has not yet been spoken, ... everything is still in the future and will always be in the future.” The untenability of this extreme relativist position should be clear: it demands that we acknowledge it as “authoritative”, and so commands our “unconditional allegiance” (both terms from Bakhtin, used with approval by Lillis in the same passage and argument but then to indicate the unacceptability of the opposite position). What are we to make of this? The one exception to the truth that nothing is conclusive must be the statement that nothing is conclusive. Although it claims to refer to everything, it in fact needs to refer to everything else, but not to itself. For if the statement itself is indeed also inconclusive (as everything in the world, about which no authoritative word has yet been spoken), then we can comfortably ignore it; it can anchor neither our beliefs about writing nor, certainly, our designs, without undermining its own validity.

A key to understanding and interpreting all approaches, not only post-modern, critical ones, is the recognition that our theoretical work, rather than being based on hard, cold facts, is based on beliefs, such as the belief that everything is inconclusive. It is one of the main contributions of critical approaches, in fact, that they have demonstrated to the academic community at large that nothing is neutral, and that we must critically examine our theoretical starting points. It is on these terms that we should also examine not only what preceded post-modern approaches in history, but also the starting points of critical approaches that are themselves part of post-modernism.

The second characterisation of approaches to writing that we turn to is that of Ivanic (2004). She explicitly acknowledges the point made in the previous paragraph: that it is beliefs that underlie our theoretical work, and that it is these that need examination. In distinguishing between various “discourses of writing” (as different paradigms about, or approaches to writing), she, in fact, defines such discourses as

constellations of beliefs about writing, beliefs about learning to write, ways of talking about writing, and the sorts of approaches to teaching and assessment which are likely to be associated with these beliefs (Ivanic, 2004: 224).

Ivanic’s presentation of the six different discourses thus distinguishes between their different views of language, the beliefs about writing and learning to write underlying them, approaches to the teaching of writing, and assessment criteria. Since our main concern is with the design of instructional materials, we again summarise this framework in two columns, referring to the identification of the discourses, and the approach that each has to teaching writing (Table 3, below):

Table 3: Discourses of writing (Ivanic, 2004: 225, Figure 2)

Discourse (paradigm)	Approach
A skills discourse	Skills approaches
A creativity discourse	Creative self-expression
A process discourse	The process approach
A genre discourse	The genre approach
A social practices discourse	Functional approaches
A socio-political discourse	Critical literacy

The expected degree of overlap and similarity with the diagrammatic representation of Lillis’s (2003) position in Table 1 above should be evident. In the exposition and discussion of these discourses about writing, there is a similar congruence. For example, in describing the sixth paradigm (Socio-political discourse), which is comparable to Lillis’s fifth approach (Language as ideological practice), the terminology Ivanic uses closely resembles that of Lillis: that the approach fosters the production of “heterogeneous, nonconformist texts and practices which challenge and subvert norms and conventions... [by writers who] can play their part in resisting and contesting the status quo, and ultimately

in contributing to ... change” (Ivanic, 2004: 238). And where Lillis distinguishes between a move from a “dominant” to a “critical” paradigm, Ivanic (2004: 241) acknowledges the progression from a restrictive view of language to an open view in the more recent paradigms.

Some preliminary critical questions

Before turning to the similarities and differences between these characterisations of approaches to writing (and research on writing: cf. Ivanic, 2004: 240) and perspectives on different traditions of doing applied linguistics, a number of initial questions surface.

First, though both characterisations outlined above are critical of skills-based approaches, the implication is that at least one of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) that have been historically identified, namely writing, need not itself be critically examined. Both analyses are silent on this point. The arguments against a skills-based approach are, however, important and noteworthy. Bachman and Palmer (1996: 75ff), for example, conclude their persuasive critique of a skills-based approach as follows:

We would thus not consider language skills to be part of language ability at all, but to be the contextualized realization of the ability to use language in the performance of specific language use tasks. We would ... argue that it is not useful to think in terms of ‘skills’, but to think in terms of specific activities or tasks in which language is used purposefully.

Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2003: 225–231) has pointed out that the historical roots of a skills-based approach lie in the behaviourism of the 1950s; that all good teachers have always known that one cannot teach skills separately; that these “skills” combine and are combined in all language use; that from a pedagogical point of view one has to be wary of isolating one skill. He remarks: “Skill separation is ... a remnant of a bygone era and has very little empirical or experiential justification” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003: 226). One therefore cannot simultaneously hold both that a skills approach is undesirable, and that skills cannot, and should not be the basis of one’s approach, only to turn around and say: but I still wish to teach this.

Of course, those who subscribe to critical and other post-modern approaches to writing would protest at this juncture, pointing out that it is the *approach* to writing that makes the difference, not writing *per se*. Their defence in this case may be that one should not confuse an instrumental view of writing with an alternative, critical conception of teaching and developing it. Moreover, what is actually happening in such writing classes is not merely the teaching and learning of writing, but of critical thinking, as well as cognitive and self-identity development, growing problem-solving capacity in a supportive environment, and the like. Still, if ways of conceptualising are important, as Ivanic (2004: 220) correctly declares, then conceiving of what we are supposed to do as “writing” constitutes an uncritical acceptance of a historically institutionalised arrangement,

viz. that what we should be teaching is writing. This arrangement, which politically entrenches and privileges writing over a number of alternatives that we shall return to below, of course benefits the proponents of writing: it constitutes nothing less than their livelihood, and will probably be as vigorously defended as the rest of the *status quo* is currently being critiqued by them. As Lillis (2003: 197) points out, the teaching of “composition” in the US constitutes a very “influential student writing research site”, but is not necessarily the only or even most desirable way of going about developing academic literacy. Surely, in a truly critical approach, we should question the very conception of such a historical arrangement, however influential and powerful it may be? Instead, what has happened in South Africa, at least, is the proliferation of “writing centres” at institutions of higher education. Would that kind of institutionalisation of writing itself not qualify as “reproductive”, i.e. merely replicating, but now at an organisational and therefore potentially much more powerful and influential level – since it is institutionally sanctioned – that which is happening in the US and perhaps other parts of the Western world?

These questions become all the more pertinent when one considers that, if we could indeed isolate one skill that is of crucial importance to students at higher education institutions, where such centres dedicated to writing are being set up, might we not have considered reading as the focus of our intervention? Some forty years ago, there was much attention in South African universities to the inadequate reading levels of students, and it was fashionable to lament their lack of reading “skill”. Do we have empirical evidence that this situation has now changed, and that we no longer need to worry about reading, or are we simply chasing a new fashion, one delivered by the currently most prominent and influential discourse in the field of writing and applied linguistics research? Is there enough evidence of the contextual appropriateness – a criterion frequently employed by critical approaches – of such institutional development as we have referred to above?

A second set of initial critical questions arises from the unashamedly language-based framework that the characterisations of approaches to writing under discussion adopt. In Ivanić’s words, “the discourses I have identified ... derive from views about language” (2004: 240), and the same is true of the distinctions made by Lillis (2003). This is typical not only of different ways of conceptualising and researching writing, but also, as we shall see below, characteristic of at least two very influential earlier directions in applied linguistics. Is language alone, or one’s view of language, sufficient, though, in providing a rationale for instructional design? The history of applied linguistic concept-formation indicates otherwise.

Indeed, though there are critical questions to be raised against a multidisciplinary conceptualisation of applied linguistics, which we will again refer to below, the contribution of such an approach in the case of applied linguistics research is that it problematised teaching and learning language (as two actions that need inputs from, respectively, the disciplines of pedagogy and psychology), as against the uncritical and naïve previous acceptance of linguistic categories as the building blocks of both teaching and learning. Perhaps even more important for the

current discussion, this view stimulated empirical research by suggesting a possible (multidisciplinary) agenda.

In the characterisations of writing being referred to here, there is indeed, in addition to the prominence given to language, some reference to “learning to write” as well as to teaching, but the beliefs about “learning to write” identified in each of the discourses appear to be founded on assumptions (“You learn to write by writing on topics that interest you”; “Learning to write includes understanding why different types of writing are the way they are, and taking a position among alternatives” – Ivanic, 2004: 225, also 235) rather than on theory or the results of empirical investigations. The assumptions sound alluring, but there is no reference to actual (empirical or other) research that has probed them. If there is one lesson in the history of applied linguistics, it is that however intuitively acceptable an assumption about learning may sound, it deserves critical examination. One may consider here the number of demonstrably false assumptions made about language learning that were already known at the time that Lightbown and Spada (1993: cf. p. xv, but especially Chapter 6) began to summarise and popularise this for language teachers and course designers. This knowledge, as well as a number of subsequent studies, has indeed reformed language course design (for a discussion, cf. Weideman, 2003b). Has it similarly informed the design of the teaching of writing?

The point about empirical (or other) research calls up a third set of concerns, which relate to the anti-assessment bias that is evident in some current approaches to writing. As Ivanic (2004: 239), with reference to the socio-political approach to writing, puts it: “The notion of assessment is antithetical to this discourse.” An implicit but unstated criterion, she observes, may be that writing can be judged by the extent to which it manages to unmask the political power relations on which it is built, or the degree to which it fosters equality. But, as Ivanic goes on to ask, how does one measure this? Both of these appear to be unmeasurable, and even gauging the quality of the writing in terms of its political consequences seems an impossibility. I would suggest that the anti-measurement bias of critical approaches is possibly related to an anti-empirical approach to academic work, which in turn is related to the valid criticism of rationalist approaches to design. Such approaches would hold that once we have discovered their version of scientific truth, the incorporation of that truth into instructional design would be an authoritative solution to the language learning and teaching problem. In applied linguistics, however, neither the latter approach nor such naivety about measurable entities or actions holds sway any longer. But there is some appreciation that quantitative evidence is not *ipso facto* wholly corrupt, and may well point the designer into alternative directions. If measuring the political consequences of writing is impossible, one should at least attempt to enquire about the fairness, to students who are at the receiving end of the pedagogy, of developing competence in writing in a certain way (as compared to others). If teaching and learning to write is about social responsibility (Ivanic, 2004: 239), then the teacher must be accountable for the effectiveness of the way in which students are taught, as opposed to alternative ways.

Alternative frameworks

The discussion so far suggests that there are a number of alternative ways to look at the problem of teaching and learning language. Specifically, for those struggling to find better solutions to the problem of writing, that problem is almost exclusively embedded in the context of higher education, and tied up with all the complex questions that surround the concept of academic literacy. It is from this context that a number of alternatives present themselves:

What if we don't isolate writing as a skill?

Will it not be more productive, in other words, to acknowledge, in the very terminology that we adopt, that the problem is greater than that of mastering a single skill? What possibilities are opened by the acceptance that in order to become academically literate, a number of "skills" are inseparably intertwined, and that the conceptual clarity that we achieve by separating them, has no, or may perhaps even have negative and restrictive, effects on the learning?

What if such isolation is itself a leftover from a bygone era?

Does the conceptual isolation of writing, implying that it is a separately treatable problem, not derive from historical antecedents, specifically writing composition classes in US universities, that are no longer or at least not necessarily contextually appropriate in other places, such as South Africa? If we uncritically accept that what was relevant in decades past in one context will automatically be useful in another, then we leave unexamined, and untouched by critical engagement, one very powerful historical approach. That, I would suggest, is not in line with the post-modern maxim of being accountable for one's designs.

What about viewing the problem from a different perspective?

There are numerous examples in applied linguistic work over the past five decades that demonstrate how viewing the same problem from a different perspective sometimes breaks a logjam, and opens our eyes to alternative ways of doing. The field of second language acquisition studies presents an array of such examples, specifically in the gains made for language teaching design in looking at such acquisition from an interactional instead of individual angle.

In my own work, looking at the problem for students in institutions of higher education as one of academic literacy has resolved a number of issues, including a variety of instructional design problems. What therefore if, instead of requiring students to become skilful in academic listening, speaking, reading or writing skills (or worse, even in just one of these), one takes as the basis of their instruction a construct of academic literacy that asks, for example, that they learn to demonstrate a competence in academic vocabulary; make sense of metaphor and idiom in academic usage; see relations between different parts of academic texts; become literate in interpreting graphs and diagrams; learn to recognise and manipulate different genres and text types; distinguish main points from peripheral ones, see the difference between essential and non-essential, fact and

opinion or cause and effect; compare by classifying and categorising; or learn how to use different language functions (defining, concluding, etc.) to build an argument (cf. Weideman, 2003c: xi for a more comprehensive list)?

Such a definition, we may note, has no reference to writing, or reading, or listening. It is neutral, in effect, in respect of these traditionally separate “skills”. Yet, in conjunction with the requirements that seeking, processing and producing academic information is what constitutes a typical academic task, this kind of blueprint for academic literacy is highly productive in generating and justifying the design of instructional materials, and of doing so in a way that emphasises not only writing, but exploits all the other “skills” as well.

What is / are potentially omitted from the characterisations of writing?

On their own terms, and in respect of their characterisations of different approaches to writing, we may assume that the discussions referred to above are adequate, and constitute acceptable versions of what has happened in the history of writing. Of course, one need not take a purely historical view: as we have already observed, other categorisations (cf. e.g. Johns, 2005) are possible.

The question that then remains, is: what do frameworks about the work done in related fields or disciplines tell us about possible gaps or omissions in the work done historically on writing? Does writing have anything to learn from its academic next-door neighbours? And will such comparison help it to resolve any difficulties?

Before we attempt to answer this last question in the next section, it, perhaps, is appropriate to point out that, in discussing different approaches to writing, we have also been discussing various frameworks that have been influential in generating research and research agendas for writing (and for applied linguistics in general, as discussed in the next section). Indeed, as Ivanic unequivocally states (2004: 240), this is the major potential contribution of viewing writing in terms of the framework she has developed. In addition, there may be “hybrid instantiations” of some of the discourses in concrete practices (Ivanic, 2004: 240, cf. also 241). The same is true of designs for teaching and learning language that we turn to now: in the design of instructional materials and in teaching practice, influences from various applied linguistic traditions may be evident.

Characterisations of applied linguistics

Having looked at characterisations of different approaches to writing, we turn now to consider two current views on approaches to applied linguistics. For the sake of brevity, I shall not consider the old debate of whether applied linguistics is “linguistics applied” or “applied linguistics” (cf. Davies, 1999: 12 *et passim*). With Pennycook (2004: 801), I agree that this is a peripheral issue in striving to articulate an adequate definition of applied linguistics, and that we need to go “beyond even a view of applied linguistics as a domain of interdisciplinary work.” Viewed as a discipline of design, as we have suggested above, applied linguistics has nonetheless historically been conceived in a number of different ways.

Rajagopalan’s analysis of the landmarks of early applied linguistics (2004: 399f.) identifies roughly the same points as Weideman (2003a), and there is agreement between them, too, on their appreciation of the role of subsequent traditions in applied linguistics such as second language acquisition studies (Rajagopalan, 2004: 402f.), multidisciplinary approaches (Rajagopalan, 2004: 407, 410), as well as critical applied linguistics, that “contribute[s] to correcting historically instituted social injustices and pave the way for ... emancipation” (Rajagopalan, 2004: 414). In addition, both analyses regard the critical turn that applied linguistics has recently taken, and its concern with ethical questions and accountability, as a sign of maturity, of the coming of age of the discipline. What is equally significant for the current discussion is that, while both refer generously to language teaching, Rajagopalan (2004) makes no mention of the teaching of writing. In fact, in the whole *Handbook of applied linguistics* (Davies & Elder, 2004), in which Rajagopalan’s analysis appears, not a single chapter title refers to writing. (Unlike in the rival handbook of applied linguistics that – tellingly perhaps – originated in the US (Kaplan, 2002), which has a solid chapter on second-language writing: Leki, 2002). It is as if the lack of reference to applied linguistics in discussions of approaches to writing, at least in the UK, is reciprocated here, and it reinforces the suspicion that there may be an unhealthy divergence in approaches to writing and applied linguistics.

Since Rajagopalan’s and Weideman’s analyses are largely in agreement, we again, for the sake of clarity and brevity, use only the schematic characterisation of the six different traditions (or generations, or models) of applied linguistic work that can be found in Weideman’s analysis, and is given in Table 4, below:

Table 4: Six traditions of applied linguistics (Weideman, 2003a)

Model / Tradition	Characterised by
Linguistic / behaviourist	“scientific” approach
Linguistic “extended paradigm model”	language is a social phenomenon
Multidisciplinary model	attention not only to language, but also to learning theory and pedagogy
Second language acquisition research	experimental research into how languages are learned
Constructivism	knowledge of a new language is interactively constructed
Post-modernism	political relations in teaching; multiplicity of perspectives

The similarities with the characterisation of different approaches to writing are obvious: the first applied linguistic tradition, which was heavily influenced by behaviourist theories, is not dissimilar to the skills discourse (and view of language) distinguished by both Ivanic (2004) and Lillis (2003). Likewise, the last tradition (post-modernism), with its emphasis on political relations in teaching, and the appreciation of a multiplicity of perspectives, is similar to the critical approach in the discussions of writing (“language as ideological practice” in Lillis, and “socio-political discourse” in Ivanic).

In taking a view of language as an essentially social phenomenon, where genre, text type and discourse are functionally used to achieve interactive, communicative goals in a specific social context, much of the current (socio-political) and some of the earlier work in writing (specifically what Ivanic calls a social practices discourse (2004: 225, 234-237) but also the genre discourse) goes back to what Weideman (2003a) identifies as the linguistic “extended paradigm” model of doing applied linguistics, i.e. to the tradition that moved us from a restrictive to an open view of language, and alerted both course and test designers to the insight that language is more than syntax and vocabulary, or combinations of sound and meaning; that it is also an interactive, social instrument that we use to communicate with one another in specific settings. In its appreciation for context, for genre, and for interactivity, a post-modern, critical approach to writing no doubt reaches back to this extended linguistic model.

What, then, of the generations of applied linguistic work that fit in between this initial and the current state? The traditions or paradigms that, according to the analyses currently under discussion, have been skipped in the scholarly investigation of writing are the multidisciplinary approach, second language acquisition research, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, constructivism (which is at least mentioned in passing). It is worth noting that it is these three traditions, more than any other, that have been most productive in generating a research agenda for applied linguistic work, and for providing designers of language teaching materials with the results of empirical work that could be employed to justify such designs. The oldest of the three, the multidisciplinary approach (cf. Van Els *et al.*, 1984), for example, can be credited with emphasising that applied linguistic investigation aimed at improving language teaching must be conceived of as language education research, and squarely confront not only the linguistic features, but also the issues that concern pedagogy and learning. Second language acquisition (SLA) research has probably been the most productive in this respect (for two surveys, half a generation apart, that summarise the potential role and contribution of second language acquisition research, cf. Lightbown, 1985 and 2000). The meaning of these contributions lies mainly in their making empirical work and analyses useful once again in a context where the excesses and hubris of the initial “scientific” approach had almost terminated the respectability of any analysis based on measurement.

The implication of this comparison is to ask: where, in research on writing, has a similar set of research agendas been generated? Empirical work is, of course, being done on writing. Of this, reports found in the *Journal of Second Language Writing* are probably a prime example, and the dozens of articles recently extracted, by Silva and Patton (2004; cf. also the examples given in Leki, 2002: 62-63) for this journal from a wide variety of other sources provide a particularly illustrative one. But even among these, though implied and obliquely referred to, articles on how second language users acquire writing are not abundant. As Leki (2004: 66) points out, in commenting on “this astonishing lack of interdisciplinary interface”, “oddly, there has thus far been little interdisciplinary cross-fertilization between SLA and L2 writing, little examination, for example, of language acquisition through L2 writing...”. At least there are debates based on reviews of

some empirical evidence, such as those between Truscott (2004, but also 1996) and his detractors (e.g. Chandler, 2004) on the efficacy or not of error correction. However, it is interesting to note that one finds no reference to such debate in the surveys of different approaches to writing research that have been the focus of the discussion here, and that one is hard pressed to find a single reference to empirical work on the acquisition of writing in them, specifically to empirical work based on the critical approaches being promoted in them. Leki's (2004: 68) explanation for this is that there is still only infrequent reference "in L2 writing research to theorists and researchers of critical language awareness and the new literacies movements, such as Street, Rampton, Gee, Fairclough ...".

The further implication must then be that research on writing may have something to learn from the research traditions that inform applied linguistic designs. The latter have generated a large body of empirical investigation on conditions for learning language, some of the more recent being classroom-based (and therefore contextually more appropriate than purely experimental work – cf. Allwright, 2005).

Some preliminary conclusions

The analysis of different ways of characterising research into writing on the one hand, and of conceptualising various traditions of applied linguistic work on the other, leads to at least three conclusions in addition to the critical questions raised earlier.

First, from the point of view of course designers who wish to provide a theoretical or analytical rationale for their work, an isolating focus on writing can lead only to an impoverished, and probably uncritical, perspective. There is nothing wrong in believing that becoming a competent academic writer constitutes a crucially important result of becoming academically literate. However, since there is much that precedes one's preparation in achieving this, notably processes of information seeking, processing and production that may or may not employ writing skills, but other competences, the act of conceptualising and then calling one's support and development planning by a name that tells not even half the story is misleading (especially to unsophisticated newcomers) and unnecessarily restrictive. In fact, one might ask whether it is not perhaps the focus on writing that, in the first instance, produces the undesirable effect of "reproduction", "fossilised use", "subservience", and so forth, that the analysts whose work has been discussed here so often employ to characterise conventional approaches to writing. Will all of this really disappear once we adopt a critical pedagogy? What if the sites where critical pedagogy in writing is conducted are themselves but institutional replications of a dominant, repressive ideology?

Second, the almost exclusive emphasis on language in characterisations of writing further impoverishes the instructional designer's perspective. If we can learn something in this respect from applied linguistics, it is that not only linguistic and political factors come into play, but a number of others too.

Third, there is no necessity for post-modern approaches to be anti-assessment. In fact, there is a vigorous and growing tradition (Shohamy, 2001; 2004; cf. too Brindley, 2002) in language testing that aligns itself wholly, even in name, with critical approaches. Such a critical approach to language testing emphasises, in the same way as do critical traditions both in applied linguistics and in writing, that language test designs need to be transparent, i.e. make available as much information as possible about the test, the reasons for its administration, its construct, scoring method and content, to those taking it. A good example of an attempt at such transparency can be found in information about the Test of Academic Literacy Levels (TALL) that is administered annually to about 14 000 students at three South African universities, which is distributed both in pamphlet form, and online (cf. Unit for Academic Literacy, 2006). Post-modern, critical approaches call upon those involved in all language teaching designs to be accountable for those designs, and making such information available is the first step towards becoming more accountable.

Finally, it is indeed in the aspect of accountability that specifically critical, and more generally post-modern approaches, find their characteristic feature. Though not all the review articles discussed here articulate this in exactly the same way, it is clear that their appreciation of recent approaches is closely related to what Rajagopalan (2004: 413) calls “the growing interest among scholars in the ethical implications of their work in the field”. I trust that the discussion here has made some contribution to making our designs for language teaching both more transparent and accountable.

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The transformative agenda of educational linguistics for English language teaching in Africa

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Although the question is not asked so explicitly, the general feeling is that foreign language learning and teaching should and could be far more than just acquiring a communicative competence (Dirven and Pütz in Intercultural communication, 1994).

Introduction

Educational linguistics, as one of the many sub-disciplines in applied linguistics, may be a typical example of what Cook and Seidlhofer (1995: 1) call “intra-disciplinary separatism which creates manageable sub-disciplines” – an effort to simplify and even deny the complexity and transdisciplinarity of studies in applied linguistics. At the same time, Cook and Seidlhofer (1995: 7) claim that “it is with language teaching and learning, and particularly *English* language teaching and learning, that many works on applied linguistics (and the present volume is no exception) are primarily concerned”. Publications on English language teaching and learning (like Cook and Seidlhofer’s) seem to form the backbone of applied linguistics; a state of affairs to which they contribute and which can also be seen as denying complexity.

As David Graddol (1997; 2006) shows in his surveys of English and English language teaching, publications in the field are indeed extensive. However, this does not suffice as a categorising principle for academic sub-disciplines, particularly if a discipline such as applied linguistics is linked to only one language. For that reason the term “educational linguistics” is used in this article because it illuminates and clarifies a direction in applied linguistics that bridges the distinction between its traditional sub-disciplines: psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. Education itself is an inter- and transdisciplinary field where research methods and tools have been developed to enable investigations that encompass the psychological and the social. Therefore, the location of linguistics in education does not diminish or deny complexity, as Cook and Seidlhofer fear, but rather recognises and explores it.

The explicit link with education is, moreover, strategic. The transdisciplinary nature of education and applied linguistics means that academics and students move between faculties, units or schools that may regard themselves as typically ‘Arts and Humanities’, on the one hand, and as ‘Education’, on the other. The explicit nature of a name like “educational linguistics” bridges this divide,

specifically for mainstream educationists who may not immediately understand the “applied” part of “applied linguistics”.

In a post-colonial and, in this case, African context, the name “educational linguistics” has become more significant in the wake of Pennycook’s (1994) groundbreaking work, *The cultural politics of English as an international language*, where the teaching of English is subjected to critical enquiry. In fact, one could argue that his work is a wake-up call in the tradition of Freire’s (1970) *critical pedagogy*, which was also based on language teaching (more specifically, the development of adult literacy). Pennycook (2001) continues his work in *Critical applied linguistics*, as does Canagarajah (1999: 19-22), who goes on to describe the “hostile reception” of critical pedagogy in the field of English language teaching. By locating (English) language teaching *explicitly* in its educational context, the insights provided by critical pedagogy can become part of mainstream (English) language teacher education courses and TESOL courses.

The purpose of this article is to suggest that English language teaching and learning must be situated in a context with a very specific *transformative, educational* agenda. I argue that educational linguists in Africa should define a research agenda that serves its students in such a way that they transform current language practices in schools which result in large numbers of learners either dropping out or not performing well. Such a transformation of classroom language practices must enable learners to not only survive, but actually thrive in a global context. Suggestions are made as to the main components of such an agenda, based on the linguistic and educational circumstances that obtain in Africa. In this way, it should be possible for African educational linguists to “force (post)-colonial hybridity-as-conflict in the periphery upon the (‘western’) centre, which will in turn pre-empt ‘business as usual’ there” (Parakrama, 1995: xiii).

The argument presented in this article is indebted to similar arguments raised in India and Sri Lanka (see references below) because of my conviction that the circumstances in which teachers and researchers operate in these countries are very similar to those that obtain in Africa and that we can learn important lessons from their insights.

The African context

In Africa, colonial languages such as English, French and Portuguese are increasingly used as home languages by the elite, who are able to afford the best schools and consequently are appointed to the best jobs. In these circumstances, Bobda (2006:67) argues that there should be reference to *new* mother tongues because (in Cameroon, in his case) “French, English and Pidgin English have taken over the mother tongue status and functions of indigenous languages”. Linguists from other parts of Africa describe similar situations (see, for example, Kirunda, 2006). Learning these languages, and English in particular, is crucial to peoples’ upward mobility. In fact, well-resourced schooling generally becomes a major factor in the globalisation enterprise and in the process of acculturation.

Canagarajah (1999) links the teaching of English and teaching through the medium of English to the pedagogical practices and values of 'the centre' – mainly Britain and the USA, where teaching materials and teaching support are generated within the cultural and intellectual paradigms of those societies. By using teaching materials and practices developed in and for such societies, in Sri Lanka, according to Canagarajah (1999: 23),

the school is making a statement on the communities and cultures it considers as normative. It aligns itself with the dominant culture (based in this instance on urban, technocratic, middle class values) and dissociates itself from others ... Their legitimacy and superiority would therefore seem entirely 'natural' to students – they are, after all, the course's hidden curriculum, presented under the guise of teaching the simple present tense.

Most English language teachers and educational linguists will recognise the similarity to Africa. Although it is possible to argue that it will be in the best economic interests of all concerned that as many people as possible should learn English and become middle-class citizens living in urban areas, the problem remains that the majority of African populations live in rural areas, often in abject poverty. The trappings that go with a typical Western education, such as solid structures for classrooms, desks, books, not to mention electricity, photocopying machines and internet access, simply do not exist. In such circumstances, the English language (or French, or Portuguese and, to a limited extent, Afrikaans in South Africa) attains symbolic value as the gateway to a better life. This is the foundation for arguments supporting colonial languages as languages of learning and teaching in the face of evidence that neither schools and teachers nor communities can sustain the effort of teaching in English or thrive solely because the language of education is English (see, for example Bamgbose, 2004: 22).

The obvious alternative then, is to use indigenous languages for learning and teaching. Unfortunately, the use of African languages in education does not seem a worthwhile enterprise to many teachers and parents, who are often accused of neglecting their own languages, something that is increasingly said of Afrikaans speakers as well. In 1991, Dirven pointed out (1991: 2) that "most African political and intellectual leaders now share a fairly negative attitude towards their own native languages and dialects". More than a decade later, Bamgbose (2004: 18) points out that conferences on the use of African languages in education are still debating *whether* to use African languages as media of instruction rather than *how* to use them.

The social psychology of language use is clearly grounded in the perception that speakers of African languages do not care for their own languages since, as Mazrui and Mazrui (1998: 8) indicate, racial dignity is more important to Africans than linguistic aspirations. (They explicitly exclude Afrikaans speakers in this case.) One could argue, however, that dignity is sought through (among others) linguistic aspirations by learning and using a high status language such as English or French, thereby disconnecting racial identity from one of its most obvious markers: an indigenous language. The implications for the future survival

of African languages are that, while language planners and linguists will probably encourage the use of local languages in high-status domains, the speakers of these languages, including high-ranking politicians and businessmen, may want to rather use English to enhance or confirm their standing. The circularity of the process ensures that low status languages, essentially, remain low status.

This situation is not unique or limited to Africa. Graddol (2006: 55, 56) describes similar situations in India, Singapore and China, with English becoming the home language of urban communities. European universities increasingly offer programmes in English and, in preparation for university studies, the language is introduced at primary and secondary school levels as well.¹ Bi/multilingualism is increasingly seen, not as the competence to use more than one language, but as the competence to use *English* plus local languages. Language planning increasingly means planning for local languages vis-à-vis English² and the language is seen as indispensable to internationalising drives by universities in particular (Ritzen, 2004). As Graddol (2006: 20) claims:

English is in the thick of all of this. An 'English factor' is found in virtually every key macro trend: whether it is business process outsourcing (BPO), the rise of urban middle classes around the world, the development of new communications technology such as the internet, the global redistribution of poverty, the changing nature and control of news media, or the reform of education in universities and schools.

This trend is also seen in Eastern countries such as Singapore (see Chew, 1999), Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 1999) and China. Zhenhua (1999: 79) describes the strategies and processes that are followed at Chinese universities to increase competence in business English, in particular, and to train English language teachers: "Clearly, integration in world markets has become a basic fact of Chinese economic life, and consequently business English and business English education are becoming more important in China".

In view of these trends, why would one make a case for educational linguistics to have a transformative agenda in Africa, in particular? If English is the *lingua franca* in domains that matter and if applied linguistics is fed by that fact, why should Africa have a different focus or agenda? In the remainder of this article I will argue that educational linguists in Africa should have an agenda – science is not neutral, after all. I will argue that, if African linguists share the conviction that educational linguistics should have an agenda (any agenda), their task is qualitatively different from that in, for example, Europe or the USA. The argument will focus on two areas in particular:

- ☞ English language teaching and learning; and
- ☞ Language planning for bilingual education.

¹ In Germany, English is used increasingly as a LoLT at secondary school level and there are at least twice as many schools offering additional courses in English than in French (Fremdsprachen als Arbeitsprachen im Unterricht, 1997). See also Graddol (1997:44).

² See Brink and Van der Walt, 2005, for a full discussion.

The first area will be used to highlight transformation issues in teaching practices and the type of language learning that will empower students. The second area will take a broader view of the educational context in an attempt to create an educational environment that will be to the advantage of all students and that will make it possible for educationists and governments to do realistic language planning. Although these are obviously not the only issues of importance, they create the framework within which educational linguistics can address, for example, language teacher education, language variety and change and critical language awareness.

The agenda for English language teaching in Africa

Context: The role of English in Africa

If one had to list the reasons for teaching English in a particular context, number one would usually be that it is an international language and that knowing the language usually translates into better job opportunities and international contact of some sort. In Africa, however, English has also become the language of national unity, because most countries house what is generally perceived to be an unmanageable number of home languages. In the African perspective on English language teaching, the multilingual nature of communities and the potentially dangerous link between linguistic nationalism and ethnic strife is always in the foreground. It seems as if this link is not as pronounced in the literature on English language teaching in the East, where the potential for religious rather than ethnic strife seems more evident. This is, of course, an oversimplification but it seems as if the argument that English can act as a neutral instrument to obtain national unity is more evident in Africa than in the East, where access to international markets seems a bigger motivation for the use of English.

The agenda of English language teaching in Africa

Quite a number of studies that take a critical look at English language teaching in developing countries have emerged since the mid-1990s, notably on India (Agnihotri & Khanna, 1997), Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 1999; Parakrama, 1995), the Phillipines (Pennycook, 1994), Singapore (Chew, 1999) and Africa (Mazrui, 1998; Cuvelier *et al.*, 2003). The awareness that such studies have raised is that, since the majority of English teachers are not home language speakers of the language, they have the ability and responsibility to develop a critical stance towards implicit assumptions about the superiority of Western culture, in general, and the English language, in particular, as they manifest in textbooks, teaching materials and teacher training courses. Canagarajah (1999: 35, 36) notes the complexity of this relationship between what he terms the 'centre' (mainly English-speaking countries where teaching materials and courses are generated) and the 'periphery' (mainly developing countries where such materials and courses are used):

Adopting a periphery standpoint does not mean that I have to ignore centre traditions of thinking and discourses. I can engage with them from my

location as a periphery subject... I employ the resistance paradigm reflexively – that is, even as I use it as an interpreting medium, I appraise its usefulness for periphery communities and classrooms, with a readiness to revise its constructs.

This offers some idea of the direction that an agenda for English language teaching should take: it should start off by relativising the centre “traditions of thinking and discourses” and continue by critically interpreting resistance to centre traditions *in the context* of a specific, local classroom. This would put two items on our agenda: firstly, English must be taught as one of many languages because African communities are multilingual, and secondly, the implications of emerging indigenised varieties of English must be accounted for in English language teaching practice.

The fact that most teachers of English in Africa use it as an additional language and teach it to learners who will use it in addition to local and other international languages means that, first of all, English language teaching has to take cognizance of its position as one language among many. This simple fact is not obvious in textbooks and materials that have been generated in English-speaking countries – it is often not obvious in materials developed in Africa itself.

In task-based and situational syllabuses, the illusion is created that the world outside is English: from the post office to the boardroom, from asking for information to writing a letter. Learners are often asked to find English newspapers, magazines or books to bring to class. They are given interview tasks or expected to conduct surveys in English outside the classroom. In poor, rural areas this will prove to be impossible, and even in urban communities where there will be print material in English, it may not be that easy to find a monolingual English-speaking person to bring some degree of authenticity to the kinds of tasks that teachers like to assign. Except for the hegemonic impression that everybody should speak English, this kind of assignment also creates unbearable artificiality in the name of communicative language teaching. Why would a learner write a letter in English to his or her grandmother? What is the sense of conducting an interview in English with a local sports hero? Learners typically share a local language with people outside the classroom. Even the practice of asking learners to speak only English in class denies them the opportunity to develop a rich variety of ideas in home or local languages and only then choose the ones they wish to present in English. Young (1995: 108) argues against the exclusive use of one language (a legacy of the Direct Method) by pointing out that “the socially divisive effect of such direct methodology is far too high a price to pay for the neatness and economy of effort afforded by monolingualism in the classroom”.

If we look at the reasons why children in Africa need to learn English it is surely not to ask for stamps at the local post office. The main purpose is to prepare them to study and continue their schooling in English. In such a context, the English language teaching class should focus on developing academic literacy above all. Of course it is not possible to ignore communicative language functions, but the

truth is that this is fairly low down on the list of priorities for children who need to pass geometry, history, mathematics and science in English. Even the sacred teaching of Shakespeare, poetry and novels should take second place to the development of skills needed to make sense of academic texts.

What this means for a “reflexive resistance paradigm” à la Canagarajah, is that the materials from the centre are of limited use. We can extract elements from them to *supplement* the main thrust of our teaching, which should be materials development to teach English for academic purposes. The distinction between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) is relevant in this case, but it is important to emphasise that BICS should not be seen as the basis for CALP – the main focus should be CALP, particularly in the early years. BICS should only be developed along the way and for formal types of communication, since most informal communication will probably take place in a local language.

English in multilingual contexts: the case for bilingual education

The teaching of English *in multilingual contexts* is emphasised in the above discussion because it is the solution to the impossible choice between home language instruction, on the one hand, and English as a language of learning and teaching, on the other. This means that teachers need to acknowledge two things:

- ∞ Other varieties of English are legitimate forms of English;
- ∞ The home language is a resource rather than a hindrance.

A World Englishes awareness in English language teaching

I have argued elsewhere (Van der Walt, under review) that the role of English as a *lingua franca* means that English language teachers should not see native speaker standards as the ultimate goal of their teaching. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of local varieties of English means that teachers have to examine their own prejudices as far as accent and non-standard forms are concerned; they have to re-examine cherished notions of what constitutes ‘proper’ and ‘correct’ English. The degree to which teacher trainees are willing to do this has been described elsewhere (see Van der Walt, under review) and it seems as if teachers feel that their identity as arbiters of good taste and correctness is being challenged. In such a climate it will be difficult to develop the requisite sensitivity for local English norms and practices.

Teachers who share a home or local language with their learners are in a unique position to understand the grammatical and phonological features, as well as the pragmatic conventions, of indigenised varieties of English. They will need to negotiate a route that takes into account conventional teaching materials, as well as local sociolinguistic rules. It is common, for example, to see minimal pairs practice in school textbooks, where the purpose is to ‘improve’ learners’ pronunciation. It may very well be that learners resist such exercises because they think they may end up sounding different from their friends and family. Even though English is a marker of social status and high levels of education, most

speakers will not want to sound too learned or high brow among their friends. As Jenkins (1998) indicates, teachers need a more realistic approach to pronunciation by treating so-called standard Englishes as a point of reference rather than a goal. In this way it is possible to avoid stigmatising local varieties, on the one hand, and, on the other, to prevent speakers from moving too far away from standard forms. Rather than insisting upon 'correct' pronunciation, the teacher has the responsibility to teach different ways of speaking to different audiences and, in so doing, to develop awareness of register.

More important than accent, however, would be an awareness of local sociolinguistic rules that relate to politeness, because it is extremely difficult to use forms in one language that would be impolite in the home language. For example, in Cape Flats English it is common to repeat the name or form of address of a higher status addressee rather than using the personal pronoun *you*, as in *Can Auntie tell me where Auntie keeps the books?* This form developed because the English *you* sounds too much like Afrikaans *jou*, which is used for children or people of a lower status than the speaker, much like the distinction in German between *Sie* and *du* or in French between *Vous* and *tu*. A teacher who insists on correcting her learners would run the risk of going against powerful politeness conventions and her learners would be better served by examples of where the Cape Flats form can and should be used and where more 'standard' forms would be appropriate. Although this strategy could be criticised as reinforcing existing power relationships, it would be irresponsible for a teacher not to draw learners' attention to such potentially embarrassing kinds of language use.

In terms of Canagarajah's "reflexive resistance paradigm", the teacher has to reflect on the language use of the community outside the classroom and the short-, medium- and long-term needs of learners. If teaching English across the curriculum addresses their most immediate needs, then this should be the primary focus of the syllabus, particularly in the early years.

The role of home and local languages

In the face of research evidence that conceptual development in a home language is more effective than a sudden immersion in a language spoken only in the classroom, African countries grapple with language policies that are seen as either promoting the aspirations of a small elite by insisting on the use of English only, or as standing in the way of progress by insisting on the use of local languages – at least at lower primary school levels. The teaching of English in Africa, specifically Anglophone Africa, is inextricably linked to teaching *through* English, which links English inevitably (and probably disastrously) to the lack of teaching of and through local languages.

Bamgbose (2004: 25) points out that African languages as media of instruction are generally limited to lower primary levels of schooling and "[a]n extension to upper primary classes in order to provide for a full medium is rare".³ At secondary school level, only Somalia and Madagascar seem to have developed materials (in

³ The following five paragraphs have been adapted from Brink & Van der Walt, 2005.

Somali and Malagassy). However, even at the lowest levels of schooling, efforts to improve the position of home or primary languages are patchy and often conflict with parents' and teachers' perceptions of what should happen at school. In Mozambique, the then president Samora Machel used the age-old African argument that "none of the national languages was *ideologically or technically* equipped to do a better job than Portuguese" (Matusee, 2003: 190). In an experiment, the Institute for Education Research in Maputo used Portuguese, as well as one of the indigenous languages, in a bilingual teaching programme. The experiment was well received, both on a primary level and for adult literacy development. The study shows that students' performance improved; mother tongue instruction created a better relationship between student and teacher and a more relaxed classroom environment and there was also definite improvement in literacy skills.

Such local and limited studies fill the pages of academic journals: they are usually funded by European universities and conducted by European academics in collaboration with African academics. In the end, it is difficult to say whether they have a lasting effect on the local communities or on the national education situation. Furthermore, there is increasing evidence that parents, learners and teachers have negative attitudes towards home or primary language instruction. Muthwii (2004) describes a study with lower primary school teachers, learners and their parents to investigate their attitudes to home language instruction. All the participants preferred English or Kiswahili to their home languages for instruction in grades 1-3. In Nigeria, where a successful pilot project in home language instruction for primary school levels is being considered for all Nigerian schools, Ejieh (2004) reports that student teachers have a generally negative attitude towards home language instruction. One can argue against parents', children's and teachers' perceptions in all kinds of scholarly ways, but the fact remains that if a language of wider communication has a higher status than the home language, and people feel that their own languages are inferior, then no amount of academic interference will convince them otherwise.

Djité (2004: 11) argues that no language should be excluded from any domain, educational or otherwise, and yet generations of privileged Africans have developed their academic and professional careers with limited or no knowledge of African languages. As Djité (2004: 11) points out, "it is clear that the very concept of mother tongue education itself needs to be carefully reappraised in the light of the language repertoire of the new generation".

A number of voices that echo the sentiment that there is little sense in putting home languages and English in opposing camps have recently been heard inside and outside of South Africa. These studies indicate the value of home language literacy being treated as a goal in its own right, rather than a mere bridge to English (Street, 1994: 24). In South Africa, Banda (2000: 59) supports this conclusion by stating that "it makes more pedagogical sense to argue for improving both mother-tongue and EMOI [English medium of instruction] education than to use the CALP [Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency] and CUP [Common Underlying Proficiency] arguments for mother-tongue education". It seems sensible to think in terms of using both the home language

and English and to avoid sudden switches to English and a sudden discontinuation of teaching in the home language. Moreover, it is necessary to avoid a type of “diglossic inferiority”, as Dirven (1991: 18) calls it, whereby “one [language] fulfils all the higher functions (usually those in the hard sector) and the ‘local’ language only fulfils the lower functions, such as those of the ‘home, heart and hearth’”.

Graddol (1997: 4) warns that the link between English and economic advancement “may also be challenged as developing countries make more careful evaluations of the costs and benefits of mass educational programmes in the English language”. A case in point is Nigeria, where learners are supposed to obtain a specific credit in English in the final high school examination for university entrance. In Bamgbose’s 1995–1999 survey of learners’ performance in English (in the final examination), only 9.7% did well enough to gain entrance to universities and the failure rate was at 64.3% (Bamgbose, 2004: 22).

Certainly, the time has come to find new solutions to the wasteful practice of insisting on English in the face of, among others, a woeful lack of materials, insufficient educational infrastructure, high levels of illiteracy among rural parents (which translate into a total absence of pre-literate experiences before school) and poor teacher education. Wolff (2004: 161) claims that parents will opt for the widespread use of African languages in education when they can see the usefulness and positive results of such practices because “parents are rational and will make rational choices when given appropriate alternatives” (2004: 30). At the moment, however, at least in South Africa, voices that support a more nuanced approach to the language-of-instruction problem are few and far between. The current minister of education (Dr Naledi Pandor) has made public announcements on the importance of bilingual schooling and institutions like the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa has tried to raise awareness of multilingual schooling models (Alexander, 1995).

As argued above, the teaching of English should focus on the development of academic literacy. Combined with the development of literacy in home languages, it should be possible to teach learners to transfer academic skills from one language to the other. Just as multilingualism does not imply the full use of more than one language in all possible domains, the kind of biliteracy that can develop in bilingual education is that of “multicompetent language users” who use the various languages at their disposal for different purposes (Cook, 1999). In this sense, academic literacy becomes the ability, for example, to use more than one language to make sense of complex texts and to make effective notes fast and efficiently (i.e. without having to rely on word-for-word copying, but interpreting the lecture/text in whatever languages will provide the relevant insights in the shortest time). Similarly, the effective use of bilingual dictionaries, glossaries and translation skills are manifestations of high-level academic biliteracy. The spin-off might be that the other African languages develop and maintain their ability to mediate scientific concepts. Home language use in discussion groups is not a new

idea, but can be extended and facilitated by lecturers to include literacy activities in the home language.⁴

The development of biliteracy (in the home or local language and English) is particularly important in Africa because it involves languages with a lower status than English in a highly prestigious enterprise: learning and teaching in higher education. In addition to strengthening academic literacy, the result may be that African languages widen the domains in which they are used.

Machungo (1998: 1) argues that universities, since they occupy a position of high level teaching and are influential as far as research and critical thinking are concerned, can adopt a more active and autonomous role in influencing policy makers to adopt clear language policies that are cognizant of the ethno-linguistic pluralism that characterises all African countries. Machungo's call for "clear language policies" is an indication of an area where educational linguists can provide data and descriptions of local language use, socio-economic features in specific communities, language conflicts and linguistic aspirations.

Implications for English language teacher training

A transformative agenda for language teaching and training obviously means that English language teachers have to be trained in a particular way to familiarise them with issues like additive bi/multilingualism, multidialecticism and language variety and change. Unfortunately, too many postgraduate English language teacher trainees in South Africa, for example, still follow the traditional route of studying mainly English literature in their undergraduate courses. The insights of educational linguistics (or more broadly speaking, applied linguistics) do not generally feature in undergraduate English programmes. Although it is still possible to teach these insights at postgraduate level, many students will unfortunately already have formed fairly fixed identities as prospective, red pen wielding guardians of proper English and it may be too late to inculcate some sense of the arbitrary nature of language rules and patterns.

Current English language teaching materials and courses are still in the thrall of communicative language teaching, which does not necessarily address the needs of learners studying other subjects in the language that they are still learning. Such materials do not necessarily suit the cultural values of certain communities, where children are not encouraged to discuss problems or issues with adults. Both these issues have been dealt with adequately by researchers like Canagarajah (1999), but two other methodological issues mentioned by Graddol (2006) deserve inclusion in teacher education programmes.

An awareness of the multilingual and multidialectal context of English language teaching means, firstly, that code switching by teachers and learners will be a feature of classroom interaction and, secondly, that translation and interpretation skills need to be developed in teachers and learners. There is evidence, much of it anecdotal, that all teachers, including English language teachers, code switch in an effort to bridge comprehension problems, give examples from the environment

⁴ These suggestions are discussed in more detail in Van der Walt, 2004.

and manage classrooms.⁵ Since they are supposed to teach only in English, many teachers will not acknowledge that they use “the vernacular”, which makes it difficult to research this phenomenon. If the home language is seen as a resource rather than a hindrance, teachers can improve learners’ understanding by using it, but obviously in specific ways that will benefit learners. If learners have to write their examinations in English, it is necessary that teachers develop responsible code switching habits to deal with misunderstandings or to link knowledge with local contexts.

It is also clear that many learners may act as interpreters for their parents and elders. They will translate difficult texts or teacher generated study notes into their home languages. As Graddol (2006: 85) points out, “translation and interpreting are important skills for ESL users, though not always well recognised by education providers”. Most teachers, particularly language teachers, have a horror of returning to what they see as the grammar-translation method. The case in many African societies is something quite different, though. Making sense of difficult material by using a home or local language, making bilingual notes, or creating bilingual word lists are academic skills that are crucial for academic success. Teachers and learners who acknowledge the power of the home language to mediate difficult concepts can only benefit from strengthening bilingual study practices.

Of more importance, however, is the development of critical language awareness in all teacher trainees, whether they teach mathematics or business science. They will also be teaching learners who use English as an additional language and they will therefore need to be informed as to the problems of studying in a language that may not be well developed. Dealing with students whose proficiency in English is limited is a well-developed field in the USA, but the view of student performance in terms of their English deficits has to be resisted and adapted to local schools. Teacher trainees should be sensitised to the importance of the home language so that they can resist the idea that the answer to poor scholastic performance merely requires improving English language skills: the importance of the home and/or local languages as mediators of knowledge must be acknowledged constantly. A language awareness component including issues like the use of code switching to explain difficult concepts, allowing the use of home or local languages in the classroom, developing bilingual word lists and distinguishing between conceptual and language problems should be part of every teacher trainee’s professional education. Young (1995: 109) suggests that all prospective teachers should develop “scholastic literacy”, which “would enable the subject teacher to help pupils translate difficult vocabulary, concepts and written material from the medium of instruction into the pupils’ first language”.

Conclusion

When one studies David Graddol’s overviews of English language teaching in 1997 and in 2006, one would imagine that Africa has fallen off the map. The name

⁵ See, for example, De Beer, Mabule & Van der Walt (2001) and Canagarajah (1999:130ff).

'Africa' appears 26 times in the 66 pages of the 1997 survey and 11 times in the 132 pages of the 2006 survey. It is *not* only the quantity that is important; the context in which the word appears is also significant. A pathological view emerges of a place without data and, therefore, without consequence: beyond understanding, out of view. In the 1997 survey the references are as follows:

- ☞ Twelve references are to issues like slave trading, colonisation, and the fact that Africa forms part of the "information poor" of the world, that it is the least connected to the global world.
- ☞ Eight references are to language issues: the number of ESL speakers, designations on maps, major languages in Africa.
- ☞ Five refer to possible contact with trade partners or international student numbers.
- ☞ One refers to the changing demographics in different parts of the world: Africa obviously has many young, potential learners of English.

In the 2006 survey, there is even less mention of Africa:

- ☞ Five references to expatriates with the obligatory photo of African asylum seekers (in Spain) in a repatriation holding station.
- ☞ Five references to languages and language teaching, with the obligatory photo of many children crowding into one school seat.
- ☞ One reference to an African news channel.

Is this good enough? In a survey of the prospects for a language that is literally seen as the salvation of rich, as well as poor, parents and students, surely we need to become more visible? A sure way for educational linguistics in Africa to disappear off the radar screen completely is to pretend that we have the luxury to follow any research whim as if funding and resources are unlimited. As Dirven had already pointed out in 1991, "the multicultural and multi-ethnic diversity of Africa and of almost each African nation is not comparable to any cultural or linguistic diversity in Europe" (1991: 3). Unless we begin to set our own agenda and treat African contexts in their own right, with their own research requirements, we will not have any impact on policy making and implementation and we will certainly have no impact on the global language teaching practices that are imported into Africa and that may well be doing more harm than good.

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Living through languages: An African Tribute to Rene Dirven is a collection of scholarly research meant to honour the various facets of his academic legacy, which includes language policy and politics, language acquisition (specifically in multilingual societies), the role of English and English language teaching and a life-long interest in cognitive linguistics. As Professor Felix Banda (University of the Western Cape, South Africa) notes, "Although the book is meant to celebrate René Dirven's contribution to African linguistics and society generally, the contributions are truly a celebration of the excellence of African research, the very virtues René's research demonstrated over the years".

The book includes contributions by European and African scholars who have worked with René Dirven in an African context in particular:

- Jan Blommaert
- Herman Batibo and Birgit Smieja
- Theodorus du Plessis
- Augustin Simo Bobda
- Riana Roos-Paola
- Martin Pütz
- Willem J. Botha
- Vic Webb
- Albert Weideman
- Christa van der Walt

"The volume of data presented by the authors and the varied methodological approaches used leave no doubt that this is collection that represents serious academic input and the contents will be an invaluable reference to those doing research and teaching at the universities. This is certainly a must-read for those interested in comparative work in African language problems this century."

Kembo-Sure (Moi University, Kenya)



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