

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO LANGUAGE POLICY AND TRAINING AND
DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN INDUSTRY, WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO DEPARTMENTAL PRACTICE AT ESKOM.**

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Although this data is based on empirical research conducted in 1999, pseudonyms have been used in the report to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

ABSTRACT:

This study attempts to examine language policy and language training and development in industry, with specific reference to departmental practice at Eskom. Eskom is South Africa's largest electricity supplier with wide national and international business dealings. The organisation has extensive training and development programmes and is committed to supporting equity and the development of employees' potential through training and development. It is for these reasons that I selected the organisation as the basis for my study.

The study is conducted within the parameters of the Constitution's multilingual language policy, the Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998. According to the Constitution, the state must take practical measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages (Section 6: C). The state may also not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of language and culture (Section 9-3). The study argues that in order to ensure equity, all South African languages must be used. One way of ensuring equitable language usage is through training and development. The broad issues that are examined include:

- * language policy and practice
- * languages used in industry
- * the dominance of English in industry

- * upliftment of black languages
- * the language of training and development programmes at ESKOM
- * language training and development programmes at ESKOM

The study is based on qualitative and quantitative approaches. Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit information from management and middle-management about language policy and practice at ESKOM. Individuals involved with training were interviewed about language in training and development, and to narrow the focus, workers attending literacy training were issued with questionnaires in Zulu or English, according to preference and proficiency, to elicit information about their language usage, English proficiency and literacy training. Data was therefore gathered from all possible areas, including areas of policy, practice and implementation.

The results were analysed and a discussion of subjects' responses was presented. In summary, English is the dominant language at ESKOM, despite the Constitution's eleven language policy and the call for equity. In addition, although the majority of the subjects attending literacy classes stated that they did not understand English well, they felt that training should be conducted in English medium. The majority of the subjects also felt that it is imperative for all South Africans to acquire black languages, at least at regional level. Finally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also outlined.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. LANGUAGE AND DEMOCRACY

Language has always been an emotive issue in South Africa. One may examine language in its historical context, where it was used as a political tool to divide and rule people, or in its present context, where the country's eleven official languages make it one of the most multilingual countries in the world.

Historically, the apartheid government separated South Africans, not just by race group and skin colour but by language as well. Decisions concerning language in education, for instance, have had to do with issues of political dominance, the protection of power structures and the preservation of privilege (Hartshorne 1987:63). In Lemmer's view (1996:82), language diversity was seen as a policy of state bilingualism which catered for English and Afrikaans speakers only. Blacks were confined to the lower echelons of society. As Heugh (1987:1) comments:

"The South African government policy has been based on a strong identification of the Afrikaans language with Afrikaner nationalism - the country's ideological-political power base. Nowhere else in Africa was language employed by the ruling class to reflect its interests in such an undisguised manner."

Hartshorne (1987: 69) comments on the inflexible attitude of the apartheid government which laid down strict language policy after the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953. Afrikaans was introduced as a subject in all schools and as a medium of instruction in certain regions. Mother-tongue medium was introduced from standards three to six, class by class, starting with standard three in 1956, through to standard six in 1959. In addition, standard six public examinations had to be written in the vernacular for the first time.

According to Hartshorne (ibid), twenty years down the line the government remained inflexible. In the Transvaal in 1975, it was decreed that black secondary school pupils learn social studies and mathematics in Afrikaans medium, science and practical subjects in English medium and religious education, music and physical education in the vernacular. This was regardless of the language abilities of the teachers. Despite protests by teachers, parents, principals and the Soweto Urban Bantu Council, the government stood firm by its decision. The result was strike action by school children on 16 June 1976, with at least 176 people, including school children, losing their lives in a week. On the second day of the strike, former Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, Dr Andries Treurnicht stated:

“In the white area of South Africa where the government provides the buildings, subsidies and pays the teachers, it is surely our right to decide what the language dispensation should be”

(Hartshorne 1987: 75).

Language has always been a focal point in South Africa's journey towards democracy. Since the onset of democracy, the language issue has received much attention. Section 9(3) of the Bill of Rights states:

“The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.”

Section 6 (1) of the Founding Provisions of South Africa's new Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) lists the eleven official languages: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, tshiVenda and xiTsonga. The fact that South Africa has eleven official languages makes it one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, clearly a democratic step designed to promote inclusivity and national unity.

In addition, Section 6 (2) states:

“Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.”

The intention is to promote the use of marginalised languages.

Finally, the Constitution agrees with the world view that language is a basic human

right:

“Each person also has the right to equality before the law and no person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of language” (Section 8).

“Every person shall have the right to use the language of his or her choice” (Section 31).

Consequently, to infringe one’s language rights, is to infringe one’s human rights. The Constitution obviously has the interests of all South Africans at heart in terms of language policy, but whether this is evident in practice remains to be seen. It is in this context that the study is being conducted.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Although South Africa has a multilingual language policy, there appears to be a mismatch between policy and language practice. In practice, English appears to be the dominant language, with black parents preferring to send their children to English-medium schools. The medium of instruction at tertiary institutions is largely English. English is also the dominant language in the world of trade and industry. If language is considered a basic human right, then the state should ensure that all languages are treated equitably. Failure to do so may be considered discriminatory and unconstitutional.

1.3. RESEARCH AIM:

The aim of the study is to investigate language policy and training and development in South African industry, and to provide recommendations for equitable language practice. Languages used in industry will be examined, using selected departments in a major parastatal as cases for study. The study also intends to investigate language-related endeavours, including language courses in the field of Training and Development at the parastatal in the light of the Further Education and Training Act (1998) and the Skills Development Act (1998). These acts, in summary, aim to implement workplace strategies to develop and improve the education and skills of the South African workforce.

In essence the investigation is seeking answers to the following questions:

- * Does the organisation have a language policy?
- * What languages do employees in the organisation use for internal and external communication?
- * What training courses does the organisation offer and what languages are they conducted in?
- * Are employees expected to be literate in English in order to attend training courses?
- * Are literacy programmes offered in the organisation?
- * Does the organisation offer employees second language training?
- * What is the impact of the intended implementation of the Skills Development

Act of 1998?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of related literature and gives an overview of languages spoken in South Africa, the dominance of English and the implications it has for indigenous languages, multilingualism, language legislation, language in the workplace and language training and development.

Chapter 3 provides the research approach and methodology, as well as a description of the instruments used.

Chapter 4 examines the findings of the study. Common areas that emerged from the interviews and questionnaires are tabulated and discussed.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings, and also examines limitations of the study and outlines suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION:

The study will examine language usage in South Africa to determine the dominant languages spoken. The impact of English dominance in trade and industry and on local indigenous languages will also be discussed. The study will also examine whether there is a mismatch between language policy and practice. Thereafter the need for multilingualism will be considered in the context of language as an economic resource. Finally, the role of training and development in industry will be considered, with emphasis on the use of language in training and development.

2.2. LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY THE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA:

South Africa is a country rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. However obtaining the exact population statistics and languages spoken in South Africa is difficult, partly because the only significant information was obtained from the 1980 and 1991 censuses, both of which were conducted during apartheid times. Many changes have taken place since, including democratisation, urbanisation, extension of boundaries and an influx of illegal immigrants (Maartens 1998:19). Such changes need to be taken into consideration. However in the absence of such statistics, 1980 and 1991 data will be used. Maartens (op cit) included a table of languages spoken in South Africa, as well as the number of speakers of each language based on the 1980 and 1991 census

reports:

TABLE 1: LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

LANGUAGE	ABS.1980	%1980	ABS.1991	%1991
Zulu	6 064 480	24.4%	8 343 587	22.0%
Xhosa	2 879 360	11.6%	6 729 281	17.0%
Sotho langs.	-	-	5 951 622	16.0%
North Sotho	2 431 620	9.6%	-	-
South Sotho	1 877 840	7.6%	-	-
Afrikaans	4 925 760	19.8%	5 685 403	15.0%
English	2 815 640	11.3%	3 422 503	9.0%
Setswana	1 355 660	5.5%	3 368 544	8.6%
Tsonga	888 140	3.6%	1 439 809	4.4%
Siswati	650 600	2.6%	952 478	2.6%
Venda	169 740	0.7%	673 538	2.2%
Ndebele langs.	-	-	477 895	1.6%
N. Ndebele	170 220	0.7%	-	-
S. Ndebele	289 660	1.2%	-	-
Other	47 860	0.2%	640 277	1.3%
Oriental	95 720	-	-	-
European	148 780	0.6%	-	-

The 1991 data leads to the conclusion that the four most dominant languages in terms of speaker-numbers (Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and Afrikaans) are spoken by 72% of the population. 42% (about 16 million people) of the population reported to being able

to speak/ understand/ read/ write English. 42% also claim the same for Afrikaans and 43% of the population for Zulu.

For the purpose of this study, languages spoken in KwaZulu-Natal also need to be discussed. KZN is predominantly Zulu speaking. The Language Atlas of South Africa (cited by Maartens 1998:23) provides the following figures for languages spoken in KZN:

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF SPEAKERS OF THE LANGUAGES USED IN KZN

LANGUAGES SPOKEN	% SPEAKERS
Zulu	80%
English	16%
Afrikaans	2%
Xhosa	1%
Other	1%

Clearly, Zulu is the dominant language spoken in KZN. However, despite the figures provided provincially and nationally, English is still the dominant language used in education and in industry. Among the reasons provided for this trend is that English is an international language and ensures career success. It is felt that it opens doors to trade (Lazenby 1996:32) and that it uplifts the economy (Mesthrie in Chick 1998:93). The view of parents, learners and teachers is that English has an almost mystical power: *“If you know English well, desired things will follow”* (Lemmer 1996:84).

With the majority of South Africans having English as a second or third language, or as van der Walt (1993:290) referred to it, an “additional” language, it was inevitable that the Constitution recognise all eleven languages as official, not solely English. Recognising English as the only official language would have been construed as undemocratic and exclusionary. It has been accepted in theory that multilingualism is conducive to nation-building. However, although all eleven languages have been accorded the same status, it may be disputed that they are treated equally.

2.2.1. EQUAL OR EQUITABLE?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “equity” as “the quality of being fair; fairness, impartiality” (LANGTAG 1996:45). “Equity” must be distinguished from “equality”, which is defined as “the condition of being equal in quantity, amount, value, intensity; the condition of having equal dignity, rank or privileges with others; the fact of being on an equal footing”. Careless use of the terms “equity” and “equality” in language planning and practice can lead to miscommunication.

The eleven languages may have been given the same status, but have not been treated equally. The Founding Provisions of the Constitution are quite clear on the matter.

“All official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably” [Section 6(4)].

Had the languages been referred to as equal one would expect all documents, for

example, to appear in all eleven languages. Massive translation and interpretation projects would already have been underway. But this is not so and South Africa does not at this stage have the economic stability or human resources to undertake such mammoth tasks. Nevertheless, this does not in any way absolve government from prioritising the language issue

2.3. ENGLISH DOMINANCE:

English is gaining ground daily, and at present appears to be the only language not affected by the Constitution (McDermott 1998:105). How else can one explain the reason for English dominance in a Zulu-dominated province such as KZN?

Despite surveys indicating a Zulu majority in KZN (Krige in Chick 1998:91, Maartens 1998:23), English has assumed the dominant role. Chick (1998:92) refers to the relationship between Zulu and English as a “diglossic” one, that is one in which the two languages are used for different functions. He comments that English has taken on the role of the “high variety” that was used in prestigious public domains. Zulu assumed the role of the “low variety” and was used in less prestigious local and domestic domains.

Despite having the largest number of L1 speakers (8,5 million) of all South African languages, one may question why Zulu has been accorded a lower status than English. One reason provided for this occurrence was that mainly the working class used it

(Schuring in Chick 1998:92). Regardless, supervisors and managers need to communicate directly with employees about working conditions, job instructions, safety and benefits. A common language is necessary for communication and such issues would be better understood by the employee in his/her own language.

Because of its role as a language of high variety, speakers of English tend to be those with power. Those who speak the low variety have not been accorded similar power. The idea is perpetuated that those who are proficient in English are seen to participate in, or contribute to business, politics, technology and education (Chick 1998:92; Ogle, Daily News 24.9.1999).

One would have expected the trend to continue, had an apartheid regime continued. However in post-apartheid South Africa, with whites losing their dominant governing power, one would have expected English to have lost some of its status, and the gradual elimination of 'diglossia'. The opposite appears to be true. Blacks in power appear to prefer to send their children to English-medium schools, and to communicate in English themselves. It is interesting to note that major political speeches are articulated in English. Former President Mandela for example, on his historic release from 27 years in prison, addressed Sowetan school children in English.

2.3.1. ENGLISH DOMINANCE IN TRADE AND INDUSTRY:

Trade and industry is vital to any country's growth and development, moreso in the

newly-democratic South Africa. It is therefore critical to consider variables affecting productivity, and ultimately, the economy of the country. The dominant language in industry is English. The majority of South Africa's trade negotiations are conducted in English (Lazenby 1996:32). Admittedly, organisations and institutions that consider themselves proactive send their staff on second language courses such as Zulu or Xhosa. Such courses are usually crash courses and whether staff actually acquire the language sufficiently to communicate with Zulu- or Xhosa-speaking colleagues and clients may be disputed.

Lazenby (1996:34) is convinced that English, as the official medium of instruction in training in industry, would uplift the economy:

“If we want a sound economy we'll have to integrate education and training, adopt a flexi-mode of instruction to facilitate mobility and collaborate nationally and internationally in terms of our resources and expertise. This process can be implemented optimally if English is used not only as the lingua franca, but especially as the sole medium used in training and development.”

2.3.2 LOSS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURE:

One of the reasons provided for the dominant role assumed by English is that proponents for English-dominance seem to be more convincing in their argument than those who believe that English should not be dominant in South Africa. Therefore they are able to convey the idea that English is “a key to self-empowerment, upward

mobility, sophistication and learnedness" (McDermott 1998:106). The majority of South Africans do not have the proficiency in English that is necessary to succeed in higher education or to compete for better jobs. To the majority, English is a second or even a third language. While acquiring English may seem to be empowering, the price may be the loss of indigenous languages and culture.

In the past it was easy to identify people from the way they dressed or the languages they spoke: however urbanisation and westernisation have long since put an end to this. The trend was reaffirmed by University of Witwatersrand linguist Simon Donnelly who reflected, "*Because of the social pressure from the dominant languages, people end up not talking their languages and opt for others*" (Independent on Saturday 25.9.1999).

Many people still speak their home languages and practise their cultural traditions at home, but the outside social influences are very strong. The trend has long been prevalent in the Indian community as well, as University of Cape Town linguist Rajend Mesthrie points out, "*Although many Indians have tried to keep up with their culture in terms of food, religion and music, children often do not understand their grandparents' language*" (Independent on Saturday: 25.9.1999).

Megavarna Balrajh Reddy, an Indian language scholar recently presented the plight of Indian languages at a Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) workshop

held in Gauteng (Tribune Herald: 3.10.1999). He commented that many Indian youngsters cannot speak their home language, schools do not pay undue attention to these languages and with the closure of the Departments of Indian Languages, Indian Philosophy and Hindu Studies at the University of Durban-Westville, the Indian languages have never been as threatened. Reddy called for official recognition of Indian languages so that they might be developed to the fullest.

To lose languages that have been developing over centuries is extremely problematic. A language once lost is also a culture lost and it would be close to impossible to revive it. Consider for example the difficulties experienced at attempts to revive the Khoi and San languages. It is an arduous process. In addition, Donnelly (Independent on Saturday: 25.9.1999), who has been researching the dialect, sePhuting, reports that only about 20 000 people speak it. The dialect also only exists in spoken form. He predicts that it will be dead in 20 years. Is this the fate that awaits South Africa's official black languages if we do not start to implement language policy soon?

In times of uncertainty and insecurity people look for something to hold onto and this is usually culture and language, a thought affirmed by Dr Robert Jong of the National Cultural History Museum (Independent on Saturday: 25.9.1999). Encouraging English dominance goes against the multilingual policy of the Constitution and is a violation of linguistic human rights. As Alexander (cited in Maartens 1998:35) states:

“No nation has ever thrived or reached great heights of economic or cultural

development if the vast majority of its people are compelled to communicate in a second or third language."

Mervyn Ogle, Director of the English Language Educational Trust (ELET) cautions that when we insist on English, *"not only are we overseeing the death of African languages, but we are also acting as both executioner and grave-digger. We are truly killing and burying our African languages and the tragedy is that there are very few mourners"* (Daily News: 24.9.1999).

One's language is an intrinsic part of one's being and for it to be replaced by another may be considered sad and unjust. It is acknowledged that proficiency in English will open up doors to careers for many people and allow them to participate in higher education, politics and international trade, but how true is this for the average South African? Many South Africans are already living below the bread-line. For them, survival is the immediate concern and just getting a job is priority, not English proficiency for the sake of higher learning or international trade.

Allowing people access to English because it is fundamental to African self-empowerment is equivalent to "linguistic colonialism"(McDermott 1998:111). In the past the English language and culture acquired an economic and social value that was treasured above people's own language and culture. People with such inclinations may be considered susceptible, and Alexander saw it as a weapon to the colonisers (cited

in McDermott 1998:110). Furthermore, insisting on English denies South Africans their constitutional right to their mother tongue and perpetuates the 'English is superior' myth.

As already mentioned the dominant route taken by English over the black languages is one already travelled by Indian languages. One may assume that South African blacks are content with the situation, however Ndebele (1987:12) cautions that blacks should not remain "uncritically complacent" about English because "it is not an innocent language". In the words of an unemployed black worker, cited by Mervyn Ogle:

"In this country if you have no money and cannot speak English you are not a human being" (Daily News 24.9.1999)

2.4. ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE:

One of the main arguments that one is often confronted with in favour of English, is that English is the international language. Since the inception of democracy, South Africa has entered the global market and for South Africa to compete in the international business arena, it has been argued that English proficiency is a prerequisite. However, before one enters the 'English is the international language' debate, it must first be ascertained whether this is a valid statement.

An economic argument put forward by Taylor (LANGTAG 1996: 99) was that if

country A was buying from country B, country A's language could be used. But if Country A was selling to country B, it would make sense economically to use B's language. If country B's language was not English, then A has to make an effort to acquire B's language for the economic benefits involved.

United Nations figures show that in 1947 only 12,5% of the world's population were native speakers of English. In 1986 this figure dropped to 4,8% (Taylor in LANGTAG 1996:100). Taylor continued that the fastest growing languages in the world are Spanish, Arabic, Hindi and Portuguese. Furthermore, non-English speaking countries have a growing economic power, with Japan and Taiwan having the largest foreign reserves in the world. In addition, Italy was the growth superstar of Europe in 1989 and West Germany has replaced the United States as the largest exporting nation.

The world is changing, and the languages of international communication are definitely changing as well - from English to European and Asian languages. The National Education Planning Investigation (NEPI) report (1992:5) stated further that if English is used, it is not because it is superior, but because of the spread of colonialism. In this way more than half of those who use English world-wide have learned it as a second language.

It is evident that English is not the only language of international trade. Other European and Asian countries are fast overtaking western countries in the business

world. So why then the continuous refrain that English acquisition is necessary for international trade? Imposing English on South African second language speakers is like making false promises. Obviously, English does contribute to the global market for its functionally communicative aspects (Ndebele in McDermott 1998:114), but certainly not to the extent that it is made out to. For the rest of the time indigenous languages serve the purpose to their speakers, that English serves to its first language speakers.

In the light of the local and international language debate, it is important to consider the position of African languages. In spite of South Africa's multilingual language policy, the marginalisation of African languages could lead to the loss of culture and language in South Africa, which would be detrimental to the country.

2.5 THE PLIGHT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES - THE CASE OF ZULU :

The dominant population group in KZN is Zulu, 'kwaZulu' meaning home of the Zulus. Zulu mother-tongue speakers have long been using English as a heritage of their colonial past. The trend appears to be that local languages are being undermined and English is appreciated and respected (Zungu 1998:38). Zulu is sadly lacking in trade and industry. As was expressed earlier (Chick 1998:91), it is a question of power. English is used as an assertion of power by those who want power and status, while Zulu is used at the worker level.

Approximately 30% of the black parents send their children to English-medium schools in KZN (Zungu 1998:42). These children are often bussed out great distances and at great expense in the hope that English proficiency will eventually be the key to future success in the job market. Similar trends have been observed throughout the country - that people who are proficient in English are thought to be successful. When Zulu-speaking children attend Zulu-medium schools, exposure to English is limited. The teaching staff may not be proficient in the language and subsequently feel uncomfortable using it. The children, lacking suitable role models, therefore do not become proficient in the language at school because they lack the opportunity to use it. Much-needed suitable resources and teaching materials are usually also lacking. Code switching (changing from one language to another, eg. English to Zulu) may occur in the classroom. Code switching may help learners to acquire terminology and concepts and instil confidence in them to communicate, but the danger is that an over-reliance on code switching may actually weaken both languages in the long run.

The problem continues when black learners who are not proficient in English transfer from a Zulu-medium school to an English-medium one. They may feel alienated because of their lack of English proficiency. In addition their English-speaking teachers may not be capable of communicating with them in their home language. This affects their achievement in schools.

The situation perpetuates itself at tertiary level, where the medium of instruction is

usually English. High school graduates enter tertiary institutions lacking the basic academic skills necessary for tertiary study (Dreyer 1995:285). Students who are not proficient in English are placed at a disadvantage because lectures are conducted in English, test, assignment and examination questions are set in English (as are the answers expected to be) and all library resource material is in English. Students are marginalised through no fault of their own.

In academic circles it is interesting that in a country with eleven official languages, local literary journals are written in English or Afrikaans. The black academic who may feel more comfortable expressing him/herself in his/her own discourse is expected to use English or Afrikaans. Unfamiliarity with the genre of academic English prevents many new black researchers from publishing and presenting papers. Of course, journals are read by an international academic circle, therefore one might argue the need for English but even this argument can be defended in that the services of professional translators could be used. But where is the need for Afrikaans at an international level? Surely five years down the line from the establishment of a democracy, South Africa should be in a position to encourage its black academics by including some articles in the African languages, or even in translation to encourage a wider local readership and participation from more black academics.

Zulu is taught at an international level. The University of Cairo in Egypt, for example, has a Zulu Department (Zungu 1998:46), as does the University of London. However

local English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans seem more keen to acquire European languages than indigenous languages. Consider, for instance the doctors, lawyers, judges, banking staff and managers who are unable to communicate with patients, clients or staff in indigenous languages.

Alexander is convinced that people should be allowed to continue their normal affairs in their own language, or else South Africa could not be called a democracy. To avoid disempowering black people by insisting on a language that is foreign to them, policies have to be promoted to empower them to resist dominance from a potentially oppressive English (Natal Mercury 18.10.1996). Such strategies include mother-tongue literacy. Adult basic literacy may occur at two levels: mother-tongue literacy and English literacy. Minister of Education, Kader Asmal addresses the issue of illiteracy in South Africa's rural areas. When referring to the rural illiteracy rate of 60% and government's aim to achieve full literacy in five years he argues for mother tongue literacy programmes:

"English is maybe the lingua franca of South Africa, but you cannot impose English, either expressly or by implication. Don't punish people for speaking isiXhosa or isiZulu" (Daily News 9.8.1999).

South Africa stands to lose a great deal more than it could gain in the form of a rich cultural and linguistic heritage if the nine black languages are not given more attention.

Many Africans felt the need to *"rid themselves of their Africanness"* (McDermott

1998:111). They are cautioned that losing their own language and culture is what is disempowering.

2.6 MISMATCH BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE:

The Constitution of South Africa allows for linguistic and cultural diversity. However, South Africa does not appear to be implementing Constitutional language clauses.

Sub-section 3a of the Constitution states:

“The national government and provincial governments may use any particular official languages for the purpose of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population, as a whole or in the province.”

McDermott (1998:116) highlights the underlined words as “ the ultimate cop-out”. The words allow for English to dominate the black languages in the sense that it is not yet practical or economically viable to promote the black languages. The Constitution sets out policy, then appears to demonstrate how to evade implementation! The previous apartheid government did not appear to have a problem consciously promoting Afrikaans.

2.6.1. MULTILINGUALISM AND FUNCTIONAL MULTILINGUALISM:

There is an urgent need for South Africa to start implementing the language-related clauses of the Constitution if it wants to be a truly democratic, unified nation,

reflective of its multicultural, multilingual citizens. Monolingualism does not promote national unity. It displaces black languages and is a step backwards. Wally Serote, Chairman of the Arts, Culture, Language, Science and Technology Portfolio reaffirms the need for the nine African languages to be given the same status that was given to English and Afrikaans:

“To have a good sense of who you are, I feel you have to be given a chance to be eloquent in the language you understand best” (City Press 11.10.1998).

In an attempt to promote multilingualism in government circles among public servants, Deputy-Director of Language Planning, Dr Anne-Marie Beukes launched the “Hoyozela” (isiTsong for “Welcome!”) campaign. According to Beukes, the campaign was designed to use multilingualism for nation-building and to bring about mutual respect and tolerance among people speaking other languages (City Press 11.10.1998).

Although multilingualism is advocated by the Constitution, it would be not only tedious, but uneconomical and unrealistic if every document, report, or notice were to be presented in all eleven languages. One way of promoting all the languages could be through functional multilingualism (Langtag 1996:111).

In the South African context, functional multilingualism could be defined as the various languages functioning in different contexts. In the past English and Afrikaans functioned in all domains of public life in South Africa. The black languages were

given narrower functions. Since the Constitution has been implemented, the functions of the black languages have broadened accordingly. With the concept of functional multilingualism, each language will not have to function in every context. Users of the different languages can decide the parameters of how, when and where to use a particular language. Because it is difficult to acquire equal proficiency in all eleven languages, a system of regional languages could be advocated. Functional multilingualism stresses the diversity of languages and their purpose in society. It is important to note that while the roles of the languages may not be identical, they can be complementary (Heugh 1996:41).

2.6.2. LANGUAGE AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT: ENSURING MULTILINGUALISM:

According to the Bill of Rights (Section 30):

“Everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice.”

It is beneficial to allow everyone the right to use the language of their choice, but communication is a two-way process, and if a speaker uses a particular language, it would be Utopian to expect any South African respondent to reply in the same language. It is therefore necessary to examine South Africa’s plan of action to ensure multilingualism.

In this regard the National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human

Rights (NAP) was formed. South Africa's NAP was lodged with the United Nations on 10 December 1998, International Human Rights Day and the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. NAP was supported by the South Africa's Former President, Nelson Mandela, who stated in the Foreword to the plan:

“The experience of South Africans and of all peoples everywhere has taught that in order for the rights and freedoms embodied in the constitution to be realised, they must become part of the reality of citizens' lives, and the institutions protecting them must be deeply entrenched.”

It was hoped that the NAP would help South Africa achieve the human rights set out in the Constitution, and to overcome *“the legacy of severe inequality we have inherited”* (Dr A.M. Omar, Minister of Justice, NAP 1998:3).

South Africa is still living under the legacy of an unequal and divided society. There is still large scale unemployment and lack of access to land, property, resources, education, health care and social services (NAP 1998:15). This is irreconcilable with democracy, and what makes NAP important is that it is a government effort to implement practical and attainable plans to protect and promote human rights. Prior to the establishment of NAP, workshops were held countrywide with themes including Civil Rights, Political Rights and Cultural Rights. Cultural rights included language, heritage, religion, belief systems and customs. One of the key measures taken was the formation of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the

Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

2.6.3 FREEDOM OF CULTURE, RELIGION AND LANGUAGE:

Constitutional obligations which allow South African citizens to enjoy religious, cultural and language rights are contained in Sections 31, 185, 186 and 235 NAP does not only work in the South African context, but within international parameters.

It is guided internationally by:

- Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Article 22 of the African Charter

(NAP 1998:128).

Because NAP has only recently been established, not much has been done thus far with regard to language rights, however, a national language policy is currently being drafted. Many challenges still face NAP. With regard to freedom of language, as with the other human rights, NAP will have to do the following:

- continue to create an enabling environment for the respect and protection of linguistic rights
- provide adequate resources
- affirm diversity while building a common nation
- strengthen PANSALB
- promote linguistic tolerance

2.6.4 THE ROLE OF PANSALB:

The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) Act No.59 was legislated in 1995. PANSALB is an advisory, investigative and research body whose role is to coordinate and promote the development of South Africa's language policy, legislation and practice. PANSALB's main functions include:

- the creation of conditions for the development and promotion of all South African languages.
- the extension of rights relating to language.
- the prevention of the use of any language for the purpose of exploitation or division.
- the promotion of multilingualism.

PANSALB has the power to make recommendations on language policies and legislation. With regard to the promotion of multilingualism the board can develop, administer, monitor and implement programmes. The board can be approached by individuals with written suggestions, complaints, requests or queries relating to the development of languages, translation and interpretation facilities and linguistic exploitation, for example, if a worker does not get promoted because s/he is not fluent in English (Heugh 1995:21).

It is evident that, in theory, South Africa has the structures in place to ensure the equitable use of all languages, but such structures are very new. It has yet to be ascertained how often organisations such as PANSALB are approached by the public

and it what capacity, or perhaps complaints about language issues need to be publicised more in order increase public awareness.

2.7. LANGUAGE AS AN ECONOMIC RESOURCE:

Language is vital to the development of any country. Strauss (1996:4) refers to language as not just a tool for communication, but as an investment. Languages may be regarded as much part of South Africa's national resources as its minerals (Heugh 1995:22). However the possibility of language contributing to the national economy is not given the attention it deserves where funding is concerned .

There is a fundamental relationship between language and economic development. The relationship exists because language can be manipulated to control access to different levels of power (Language Plan Task Group-LANGTAG 1996:91). Jonathan Pool (cited in Strauss 1996:7) comments that linguistically fragmented countries are poor, especially if only an elite share a language and the masses do not have access to the language. The implication is that only monolingual countries are economically sound. It should be noted that the only truly monolingual country is Iceland (Beukes 1996:42), which many would not consider to be one of the world's super powers.

Since its democracy, South Africa has entered the global market. Globalisation requires flexible communication patterns, therefore for South Africa to communicate internationally, overall language proficiency must be improved, not just proficiency in

South African languages.

Joseph Lo Bianco, an Australian economist and linguist, influenced Australian development by correlating multilingualism and economic growth (1996:96). In his view, those who wish to simplify world communication would prefer to eradicate what he refers to as "language pluralism". What needs consideration is that the world is a different place from 45 years ago when English-speaking countries dominated trade, as referred to earlier in the review. The bulk of the world's economic powers are now found in North Asia and Northern Europe, necessitating knowledge of their languages (LANGTAG 1996:106). Trade with the East also requires knowledge of Japanese, Chinese, Hindi, and Arabic. Chinese, for example is the first language of the greatest number of people internationally (one billion). English is the first language of approximately 350 million (Heugh 1996:43). According to Lo Bianco, Australia is already targeting Chinese and Japanese as languages of trade.

Trade with the SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) is increasing. It is therefore of economic benefit to acquire proficiency in the languages and cultural beliefs of these countries, in addition to the acquisition of local indigenous languages.

The view that English facilitates development has been propagated for far too long. An alternative view is that the language of the people should be used to facilitate

development. Prah (LANGTAG 1996:98) states:

“One cannot underemphasise the fact that unless the generation of knowledge, discourse and knowledge transfer is effected in the language of the masses the conditions of the masses cannot be transformed.”

Using the languages of the people benefits a country economically. Examples of how multilingualism has been of economic benefit to other countries may be cited as examples.

*** SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN JAPAN:**

Kayuki (LANGTAG 1996:98) cites the position in Japan. When science and technology were at their peak in Japan, new terminology was not introduced in a foreign language such as English. The Japanese language was developed to keep pace with technological changes. As a result even rural Japanese people could contribute to the development of the country. They did not have to become literate in a second language first.

*** SYDNEY OLYMPICS (AUSTRALIA):**

Lo Bianco (1996:35) cites the Sydney Olympic bid as one way in which using multilingualism and multiculturalism can improve a country's economy. One of the reasons that Sydney won the bid for the Olympics for 2000 is because the organising committee mobilised the multilingual, multicultural focus of Sydney to host IOC

delegates. Delegates were addressed in their own languages, shown where to find their places of worship (mosques, temples, churches) and they were shown how communities could act as cultural hosts and linguistic mediators.

* **THE CONVENTION INDUSTRY (AUSTRALIA):**

Professional conventions attract large numbers of delegates and their families who would stay in hotels, buy souvenirs and generally benefit the country economically. Official interpretation and translation services were usually offered in four languages in Australia, as well as cultural support (Lo Bianco 1996:36).

The above are just a few examples of how mobilising people's languages ultimately benefits the country economically. In South Africa too this is possible. It is certainly necessary. In his opening address at a workshop on Language as an Economic Resource, Dr B.S.Ngubane, Former Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology stated:

"We have certainly achieved a political miracle in this country. We now have to accomplish a social and economic miracle. I believe we will succeed if we regard our languages as a resource to be harnessed and developed in much the same way as our natural resources" (Language Planning Report no.5.1 1996:3).

Harnessing languages is vital to the economy of any country One of the major

contributors to the productivity and economy of a country is an effective work environment. It is therefore essential that language studies include studies of language usage in the workplace. The South African workplace is unique in that the dynamics have been influenced by the apartheid era, with employers of the past usually being white and employees usually black. Many changes have occurred in the workplace since democracy, and although the situation has not yet been transformed totally, more power is being accorded to blacks as managers and supervisors. In the light of the changing dynamics in the workplace, it is necessary to examine how this may have influenced language usage.

2.8 LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE:

South African workplaces are rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. Work environments are moving away from the rigid hierarchies and assembly lines that characterised the American-inspired Fordist workplace. The post-Fordist workplace is more collaborative, with employees participating at various levels of decision-making (Mahomed 1996:10-12). In South Africa this is in keeping with the spirit of Ubuntu, with different ethnic groups working together. For collaboration and team work to occur, communication is essential.

The term 'communication' may be used broadly to include reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Also included are proficiency in negotiating, problem solving, managing conflict and creative thinking. Lack of proficiency in these skills could result

in lack of productivity, ultimately affecting the economy. As Narsee (1997:16) comments:

“If an organisation's workers cannot communicate, little real progress can be made towards achieving strategic objectives.”

According to the Human Sciences Research Council/National Training Board (HSRC/NTB) investigation into training in communication in the workplace (1989) a gap, or absence of a common language occurs in the workplace. The language of management and supervisors is primarily English and Afrikaans and they do not share a common language with predominantly black workers. It is this interface that needs remediation in the South African workplace (Ribbens and Regan 1995:290). Furthermore, some areas are fairly homogenous, for example largely Xhosa speaking in the Transkei. In other areas, all the South African languages may exist side by side.

In the absence of a common language Fanagalo (a combination of English, Afrikaans and Zulu) was spoken on the mines and by businessmen communicating with black employees and customers. Fanagalo has a limited vocabulary and has been resented by blacks for a long time for misrepresenting messages and oversimplifying their language (Wilkes 1978:26 in the NTB/HSRC investigation).

It must be noted that the South African workplace is still dominated largely by English, and to a lesser extent by Afrikaans, as the mediums of communication. The

absence of a common language among the workforce leads to misunderstandings and ineffective communication (HSRC/NTB Investigation 1989:1). Such communication barriers affect intergroup relations and productivity.

The languages used impact negatively on workers if they are not proficient enough to understand the languages fully. If contracts, conditions of service, pension schemes, health plans and so on are negotiated in English, a language the worker is not proficient in, the worker is placed at a disadvantage. Language also impacts on the day-to-day running of organisations in the form of communication between managers and workers, meetings and negotiations. Seventy five percent of the workers in South Africa are not sufficiently proficient in English (LANGTAG 1996:105). Therefore much of what is going on in the workplace is merely window-dressing. How else could one explain training programmes conducted in industry if they are conducted in a language the majority of the workforce is not proficient in?

Failure to appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity in the workplace can lead to what Mbali Mkhize, Communication lecturer at Mangosuthu Technikon refers to as 'communication breakdown syndrome' at a recent seminar on Management Trends (Daily News 31.8.1999). She describes examples of cultural and linguistic insensitivity, from staff using only English and Afrikaans when dealing with the public, to signs appearing in English and Afrikaans only. She also commented on African staff using English names in the work environment.

Human Resources consultant Les Owen, of Owen, Adendorff and Associates states in the same article that South Africa's cultural insularity stems from the education system where learners are still inculcated in the British way. This trend carries through from schools to the workplace. He also comments that business people who want to trade in Europe would rather learn Italian than isiZulu, which would benefit them locally. However, he did caution that 'first world business practices' should not be condemned if South Africa wanted to compete in the first world.

2.8.1 DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE:

In the multicultural, multilingual South African workplace it is imperative that issues of diversity be addressed. The Human Resource Development programme is one of the five pillars of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The main theme of the Human Resource programme is:

“The empowerment of people, through education and training, including specific forms of capacity- building within organisations and communities, to participate effectively in all the processes of democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression and community life”

(White Paper on Education and Training. South Africa 1996:8).

Effective education, training and development is one of the answers to dealing with diversity. Professor S.M.E. Bengu, Former Minister of Education stated:

“ Education and training are central activities of our society. They are of vital

interest to every family and to the health and prosperity of our national economy. The government's policy for education and training is therefore a matter of importance second to none"

(White Paper on Education and Training, South Africa 1996:2).

It is therefore important that industry address the issue of diversity through training and development of staff.

2.9. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Training and development are essential in giving people the skills which are necessary for economic and employment growth. Training may be referred to as planned, purposeful activities which improve the knowledge, skills, insight, attitudes, behaviour, values and working and thinking habits so that tasks may be performed effectively (Cheminais, et al 1998:189).

Development may be regarded as a continuation of Education and Training for the purpose of acquiring sufficient experience, skills and the right attitude to be appointed to higher managerial positions (Andrews in Cheminais 1998:189). The concepts of training and development are often confused, however they may be distinguished from one another along the following lines:

- while training focuses on current needs, development focuses on projected needs.
- training is task- oriented while development is personnel-oriented.

- training is directed at specific job requirements, while development is directed at institutional requirements (Cheminais op cit).

Although much has been said about South Africa's nineteen racially- divided education departments during the apartheid era, not much has been said about the field of training and development. However, when the ANC assumed power in 1994 training, together with education became a priority.

Historically, training in South Africa has been racially determined (Mahomed 1996:7). While whites received most of the state's training, training for black workers was negligible. The following figures for 1982 confirm this trend:

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF BLACK AND WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN TRAINEES IN 1982 (adapted from Kraak and van Holdt in Mahomed 1996:7)

	WHITES	BLACKS
% ARTISANS	92,9%	3,1%
% TECHNICIANS	87,6%	6,9%

There is also a need for training as redress because of the disparities in income and status related to race and gender. Discrimination in the selection of people for training and promotion meant that white males generally rose up in the ranks more rapidly than other people in South Africa (Green Paper on Employment and Occupational Equity

1996:25).

In order to address the skills shortage, the former government introduced the Training Act of 1990, where the state relinquished control of training to the employer and worker organisations. This law saw the establishment of Industry Training Boards (ITBs) to control training in each industry. One of the main criticisms was that education and training were seen as separate entities. This was not conducive to lifelong learning and job market mobility. Lack of proper education and training constrained society from participating effectively in decision-making (Motala 1995:1). Democracy can only be sustained by the entire population's ability to influence decisions affecting their lives.

According to Motala (1995:2) an integrated system would serve the public workforce better. The outcomes of schooling and formal education would be linked to those of industry-based training. This would contribute to lifelong learning. The implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is crucial to overcoming employment barriers. Via the NQF, training should link directly with career paths and become credit bearing, thus facilitating learning and enhancing employment security (Green Paper on Employment and Occupational Equity 1996:31).

The need for training and development co-incided with South Africa's re-entry into the global market. By the end of the 1980s there were fewer unskilled jobs and more

skilled and semi-skilled jobs. Unskilled jobs declined from 300 000 to under 200 000. Semi-skilled jobs increased from 400 000 to 800 000 (Hindson and Crankshaw in Mahomed 1996:7). This trend was characterised by the movement of African workers from unskilled to semi-skilled jobs. Because employees needed to learn how to function optimally in the work environment, how to handle equipment and how to follow procedures, training and development became necessary. Employers saw the need for training and development to increase worker-skills and productivity, ultimately increasing company profits. Increasing technological advancements also necessitated the need for training and development. Black workers needed to be trained, not only at worker level, but at middle- and top-management levels as well. Organisations would be lacking foresight if white staff were merely replaced by black staff. Black staff had to be trained to fulfil job requirements.

To be effective, training and development programmes must be cost effective, well coordinated and relevant to workers' needs. McLinden and Perkins (1998:168), for instance reflected that American corporations spend 30 billion dollars a year on training. Twenty seven billion dollars was actually wasted because only 10% was transferred back to the workplace in the form of improved skills and knowledge. South Africa is not in a position to waste money, therefore training must be optimally designed and implemented. If, for example, a particular training programme is conducted in English medium and the majority of trainees do not understand English well, the programme would be useless.

An obvious advantage of training is the improvement of staff morale. The impact is also on the community at large by providing greater stability, reducing poverty and raising the standard of living. The ultimate benefit lies in the state, because when productivity improves, a more stable work force is created, improving the country's economy (Cheminais 1998:191).

Further Education and Training (FET) includes direct or distance education by schools, colleges and on-the-job trainers. New developments in local and international education and training make changes in FET necessary (Green Paper on FET 1998). However, Department of Labour figures show that training in both the public and private sectors was actually decreasing. In 1986, 736 581 workers were trained while in 1994, 205 260 were trained (Green Paper on FET 1998:2). The figures showed that only 2.9% of the economically active population received some training. The paradox is that employers were cutting back on training at a time when the labour market was complaining of a shortage of skilled labour.

Therefore, although training is essential for nation-building there appears to be a crisis. The workplace must gain access to FET, especially for those who have been marginalised in the past. The Act should also complement the Skills Development Act (1998).

2.9.1. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT :

According to former Minister of Labour, T.T. Mboweni:

“Skilled people are a fundamentally necessary part of any economic and employment growth strategy, and re-establishing linkages between learning and working is a condition for growth” (Foreword to the Green Paper on Skills Development Strategy 1997).

Skills development emphasises competent performance by individuals, not in the sense of isolated performance of routine tasks, but by the development of necessary competencies. Skills development should result in skilled performance. In the rapidly changing world tasks do not stay the same. People have to adapt to meet new demands. People are South Africa's most valuable asset and are central to reconstruction and development. Improving skills would improve the quality of life of the worker, productivity in the workplace and ultimately the economy of the nation. Hoosen Rasool, Director of Studies at Mancosa Open Learning Centre states that South Africa cannot become a global economic player without repositioning development of its people as the single most important priority (Daily News 1.10.1999). He also says that if South Africa's standards are lower than world-class, we run the risk of playing 'catchup' forever.

The Skills Development Act No. 97 (of 1998) was instituted to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace

strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce (Skills Development Act 1998:7). The Act, towards which all organisations will pay a levy, is aimed at increasing organisations' investment in training. It is due to be implemented on 1 April 2000. Twenty seven Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) have been established by Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana (Daily News 1.9.1999). Industry training boards are presently being transformed into SETAs (Sunday Times: 12.9.1999).

According to a HSRC report on South African labour market trends and workforce needs (25 August 1999), most jobs created between 1998 and 2003 are expected to be at the professional level. It is expected that 93 000 new positions will be created over the five year period. Sixteen thousand manager-positions and 12 000 artisan-positions will also have to be filled. However 71 000 skilled and semi-skilled positions are expected to be lost. Shortages exist in the fields of economics, information technology, medicine and mathematics. Such shortages are apparent in the administrative and technical areas of management, as well as a combination of technical, business and financial skills and people skills. According to the report some organisations are compelled to employ underqualified staff and then apply training and development strategies. It is evident that skills training will play a vital role in the South African labour force, especially over the next five years.

Crucial to developing the skills of the South African labour force is the development

of language and communication skills. Technical training alone is not sufficient. It is necessary to look at the languages that training is conducted in, as well as language courses that are offered in industry to encourage multilingualism.

2.9.2 LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:

Stakeholders in education, training and development are required to plan within the integrated framework of the NQF. In order to be registered as a National Qualification, Fundamental Learning programmes should contain a minimum of 20 out of a maximum of 72 credits, from the field of Communication Studies and Language. (SAQA Bulletin 1997:16).

Language, literacy and communication are intrinsic to human development and central to lifelong learning and must not be ignored. Language and communication empower human beings to make and negotiate meaning, access information and participate in the social, political and economic life of society (Green Paper on Further Education and Training, Chapter 2:4).

In her investigation into communication skills in the engineering industry, Narsee (1997:100) reported that 90% of the training managers she interviewed considered communication skills to be just as important as technical skills. Some considered communication as the *“most important work skill because all other technical skills depend on it”*.

The role of language training as an essential, integral component of industrial training but has not received the attention it warrants (van der Vyver, et al 1983:9). Language training courses for industry would improve communication between employers and employees. According to the de Lange Commission (van der Vyver, et al:op cit) properly co-ordinated language training can lead to:

- more effective utilisation of manpower
- elimination of communication breakdown
- greater preparedness for industrial training
- better understanding of communicative and cultural breakdowns.

2.10. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION IN INDUSTRY:

Lesley (cited in van der Vyver,et al 1983:16) states:

“There are three main objectives in communicating with employees- informing, influencing and motivating. Clarity of meaning is impossible without clarity of purpose.”

In more hierarchical organisations several levels of the workforce have to be passed before workers and managers can communicate directly. Such hierarchies are barriers to the communication process. Where the workforce comprises multi-ethnic groups it is also important that the language used be culturally sensitive. Managers and supervisors must also be seen to be learning the languages of the workers. It is no longer sufficient to enrol workers for basic English literacy programmes.

Language and communication problems can lead to misunderstandings and unnecessary stereotyping in the workplace. Language misunderstandings can also cause accidents in the workplace, for example if the functioning of equipment is explained in a language in which employees are not proficient. Obviously, training that is conducted in a language that is not fully understood by employees is obsolete.

While there is a growing need for language training, it is only the larger organisations such as parastatals that can afford specialised departments that offer language services. A further problem is that in the past, training managers, personnel officers and executives were often called upon to make decisions about language, a subject they knew little about. In Britain, Industrial Language Training (ILT) was introduced to circumvent this. The targets were immigrant labour (Munns in van der Vyver, et al: 1983:20). Twenty six ILT units were established to provide training in aspects of managing a multicultural workforce as a component of their language provision. In South Africa of course, language training is necessary not only in English, but in the regional black languages as well.

The programmes have also diversified to take into account learners' needs (Special Purpose Language Training). Adult learners have specific needs and are intolerant of what they find irrelevant. They also have fixed ideas about how they want to be taught and sometimes feel self-conscious about returning to the classroom. Adult learners also have job and family responsibilities and want immediate results from courses they

attend.

2.11 THE WAY FORWARD FOR SOUTH AFRICA:

Studies need to be undertaken in South Africa to examine languages used on the workforce and within the organisation. Employees' needs must be analysed to determine programme content. Freudenstein et al (in van der Vyver et al 1983:21) feels that successful language training should include short-term courses, clearly defined learning objectives and direct feedback from on-the-job situations. Ogranovitch, cited in van der Vyver et al (1983:24) recommends flexible training times to suit the needs of the trainer and the trainee, regular revision of training manuals, refresher courses (essential in South Africa because of the number of languages involved), a trainer-trainee ratio of 1:8 and communication on a cultural level.

Different levels of the workforce also have different needs. Generally in Britain, America and Europe, the immigrant worker had to learn the language of the country s/he was working in. While this language might be English in South Africa, for sound labour relations, supervisors and foremen have to also learn the regional language of the workforce. However, an example of the Anglo American Corporation controlled mines in the Witwatersrand was given by van der Vyver, et al (op cit) The study showed that 53 dialects of the seven main black languages were spoken by the 250 000 to 450 000 black workers. It would seem easier in such a case for the workers to

learn English. The lingua franca, Fanagalo, although used extensively has caused resentment among black workers. The move is to replace it with English. Language courses for supervisors should also not simply be a matter of language proficiency. Courses must contain communication skills, human relations and cultural components. There is a need for language and communication training to be done in industry, not in isolation, but in conjunction with technical instruction. According to the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training (1997:135) South Africa stands at the verge of a new era in training. The nature of training must therefore reflect the democratic values of society. Research in the field is therefore vital.

Having examined selected literature in the field of language and training and development, the research approach and methodology used in the study will be discussed in Chapter Three. The instruments used will also be described.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH APPROACH:

The study is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Semi-structured interviews were used as a basis for gathering data about language policy and practice. The approach was selected specifically to gather information, opinions and attitudes from subjects at different levels of the workforce in specific departments at ESKOM. In addition, workers attending literacy training courses at ESKOM were issued with survey questionnaires to elicit information on their language usage, English proficiency and reasons for attending literacy training.

A brief overview of ESKOM will be presented together with an introduction to the two departments that were selected for study, namely the Distribution Call Centre and the Legal Department. Thereafter the subjects, research methodology and instruments will be discussed.

3.2. AN INTRODUCTION TO ESKOM:

ESKOM is the national electricity supplier of South Africa, with 24 power stations producing more than 95% of South Africa's electricity and more than half of the total electricity consumed in Africa. It is among the top five utilities in the world in terms of capacity and sales, and is presently one of the lowest cost producers of electricity

in the world. Electricity is supplied country-wide and exported to neighbouring countries, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. ESKOM operates under the ESKOM Act of 1987 and the Electricity Act of 1987. ESKOM was selected for the study, not just because of its vast national and international links, but because of its mission, which supports employment equity and encourages employees to develop to their full potential through training. At the end of 1998 ESKOM reported total assets to the value of R70 billion, a revenue of R21 billion and a net income of R2,75 billion. It has at present 37 311 employees.

3.3. DEPARTMENTAL PROFILES:

Two departments were selected for examination, one in KZN and one in Gauteng. The Distribution Call Centre (KZN) was selected for its direct involvement with clients, and the Legal Department (Gauteng) for its vast national and international connections. It was felt that both departments presented a realistic employee profile, reflective of South African population demographics as a whole.

3.3.1 DISTRIBUTION CALL CENTRE:

The Distribution Call Centre for the Eastern Region is situated in Westville (KZN) and offers a one-stop service to Eskom customers throughout KZN. It offers a twenty-four hour service to clients for faults, complaints, queries, applications, and electricity connections. The department was previously decentralised and only handled faults. In order to save costs the department is currently moving towards a centralised

regional system which is intended to improve customer care.

Clients may contact the department telephonically or via faxes and e-mail. All queries are processed by Call Centre agents and directed to the relevant departments. Call Centre agents are employed for their proficiency in at least two official languages and are sent on second language training and refresher courses. At present the Customer Call Centre employs 32 agents, a number that it hopes to increase to 40 by the year 2000.

3.3.2 LEGAL DEPARTMENT:

The vision of the Legal Department is that all necessary procedures and resources are in place to ensure that ESKOM is able to manage all its legal interfaces. Its mission is to provide a corporate function that is compliant with legislative and regulatory requirements. In addition it seeks to provide the total spectrum of legal services to ESKOM in a cost-effective manner.

The department, which is headed by the General Manager, has eleven Legal Advisors and seven secretaries. The strategic objectives of the department include:

- * advising the organisation on all legal matters, including merger, joint ventures and international transactions
- * ensuring organisation-wide consistency in the application of legal services
- * identifying and ensuring a proper business understanding of all relevant legislation,

government policies and directives

- * developing appropriate communication, control and monitoring and information flows between ESKOM and its subsidiaries

3.4. SUBJECTS:

3.4.1 INTERVIEWEES:

The interview sample is a non-probability one. Subjects were selected on a purposeful sampling basis from management and middle-management at ESKOM. They were selected for their involvement with decision-making processes from the following departments :

Human Resources (Head Office): Megawatt Park- Gauteng

Communication (Head Office): Megawatt Park - Gauteng

Communication: KwaZulu-Natal

Language Services: Megawatt Park - Gauteng

Training and Development: KwaZulu-Natal

Distribution Department: Eastern Region (KwaZulu Natal)

Customer Call Centre: KwaZulu-Natal

Legal Department: Megawatt Park - Gauteng

Adult Basic Education (KwaZulu Natal)

The following subjects were interviewed:

Head: Communications (Communications Head Office-Gauteng)

Communications Manager (KZN)

Head: Language Services (Head Office- Gauteng)

Senior Advisor in Employee Training and Development: Non-Technical
(KZN)

Senior Advisor in Employee Training and Development: Technical (KZN)

Employee Training and Development Advisor (KZN)

Distribution Call Centre Manager (KZN)

General Manager-Legal Department (Gauteng)

Senior Legal Advisor-Legal Department (Gauteng)

Secretary - Legal Department (Gauteng)

Secretary - Legal Department (Gauteng)

Regional Manager ABET (KZN)

3.4.2 LITERACY TRAINEES:

The Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) department has training centres in Pietermaritzburg, Margate and Empangeni. For geographical convenience, the literacy trainees from the centre in Pietermaritzburg were selected for the study. Sixteen workers attending literacy training at various levels were randomly selected to answer a questionnaire on their language usage habits, language proficiency and literacy training. Fifteen males and one female responded to the questionnaire. Their age groups ranged as follows: 3 were from the 30-39 age group, 9 were from the 40-49 age group and 4 were from the 50-59 age group. All trainees spoke Zulu as their first

language. Their jobs ranged from maintenance work, cleaning, messenger services, cooking, to power line work.

3.5. METHOD AND MATERIALS:

3.5.1 INTERVIEWS:

The interview is a widely applied technique for conducting inquiries and was selected for its ability to get access to the way subjects interpreted their involvement in the language issue at ESKOM. Charmaz (cited by Miller and Glassner 1997:100) explains about the interview:

“We start with the experiencing person and try to share his or her subjective view. Our task is objective in the sense that we try to describe it with depth and detail. In doing so, we try to report the person’s view fairly and to portray it as consistent with his or her meanings.”

Semi-structured interviews were used rather than structured interviews because of the degree of flexibility involved. Semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to probe for more detail, and ask for clarification where necessary. The subjects were also able to elucidate points that they wanted to make. Dowsett (cited by Nunan 1992:149) says that semi-structured interviews can elicit evidence about life that is not possible with questionnaires or structured interviews. It also gives the interviewee more power and control over the interview situation.

Bias is inherent in most research methods. Ideally, the interviewer should not be biased towards the subject. However, bias may be manifested in the form of unintentional errors such as forgetting certain questions, misunderstanding the interviewee, failure to probe, or preconceived expectations. That the interviewer is an Indian female could have introduced an element of bias because the interviewees belonged to different race groups. In addition, most interviewees were male. All attempts were made to eliminate bias on the part of the interviewer by ensuring neutrality and objectivity on the part of the interviewer throughout the interviews. In addition, an interview guide was used to prevent the possibility of questions being omitted. Questions that were evaded, misinterpreted or misunderstood were also rephrased. Interviewee bias was prevented by telephoning interviewees beforehand in order to set up interviews. At that time the aim was explained to them, together with possible questions. In an attempt to eliminate mistrust, a letter authenticating the study was faxed to subjects prior to the interviews. Interviewees who required time to think about questions were faxed or e-mailed a list of general questions. All interviews, except one, were tape recorded in consultation with interviewees and later transcribed to ensure that the interviewer presented an accurate reflection of interviewees' opinions. Notes were taken during the interview that was not tape recorded. Telephonic interviews were recorded on speaker phone. While some researchers may find the tape recorder an intrusive device which inhibits the interviewee, for the purpose of this study it was found to be extremely effective and reliable in that attention could be paid to the interviewee without the distraction of having to take notes. Careful observations could also be made, especially to aspects

such as body language and tone of voice.

3.5.2 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES:

Survey questionnaires were selected to use with literacy trainees rather than interviews because they could be administered under controlled conditions to a group of workers. This facilitated the analysis of results which were later tabulated and in certain cases, graphically represented. The questionnaire was designed to include multiple-choice items, as well as open-ended questions and rating scales. The questionnaire will be examined in greater detail in the section on research instruments.

3.5.3 INSTRUMENTS:

3.5.3.1 INSTRUMENT A: INTERVIEW GUIDE:

An interview guide designed on language policy, departmental practice, and training and development was used during interviews (Appendix 1). The guide consisted of five sections. Interviewees were asked questions from sections that were relevant to their jobs only. **Section One** consisted of personal details including name, age, sex, department, position in department and responsibilities. **Section Two** consisted of general questions about clients, the languages they used, the language of internal and external communication and language policy. **Section Three** was based on training and development and examined co-ordination of training and development, departmental training and development, as well as technical, non-technical, language and literacy training. **Section Four** examined departmental practice with regard to language usage.

Section Five consisted of general concluding questions designed to gather interviewees' opinions on the use of English in trade and industry and the implementation of South Africa's multilingual language policy at ESKOM. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to suggest how they felt the status of black languages could be upgraded in industry.

3.5.3.2 INSTRUMENT B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES:

Questionnaires issued to workers attending literacy classes were designed in English (Appendix 2) Translated versions were also made available in Zulu (Appendix 3). Subjects were asked to choose whichever they felt more comfortable answering. Responses could also be in English or Zulu. Translations were done by a Language and Translation Practice graduate from the ML Sultan Technikon. Instructions were given in English and Zulu, and questionnaires were administered with the aid of the ABET course facilitator, an individual who trainees trust and are familiar with.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts:

Section A consisted of personal details including age, gender, home language and job.

Section B examined Language Usage and consisted of three sub-sections. The first dealt with a grid of all eleven official languages and subjects were asked to indicate which language they could read, write, speak and understand. The second sub-section contained a four-level rating scale of subjects' proficiency in English reading, writing, speaking and understanding (ranging from very well to not at all). Four levels were

provided to prevent what Huysamen (1994: 135) referred to as the “error of central tendency” where subjects prefer not to commit to extreme ratings and use the central rating instead. Sub-section three contained a grid where respondents had to indicate which languages they used during five everyday situations such as shopping or banking.

Section C examined Literacy and consisted of four sub-sections, including grids where subjects had to indicate who recommended that they attend literacy classes, level of improvement in English proficiency since attending literacy classes and reasons for attending them. Reasons for attending were provided, for example ‘to earn more money’ and ‘to better myself’ (including ‘other’ if their reason was not included) and subjects had to rate reasons ranging from most important to least important.

In **Section D**, the final section, subjects had to provide information about other training courses they attended and the languages the courses were conducted in. Open-ended questions were also included about the languages the supervisors used when communicating with workers. Finally, subjects were asked for additional comments and opinions relating to language in the workplace.

The majority of questions took the form of grids and rating scales because the exact level of proficiency of the subjects was not known prior to the study. The format was also less time consuming for respondents. Where multiple choice items were given and

the subjects' preferred response may not have been included, an alternative response 'other' was given, where subjects could specify their choice.

In Chapter 4 findings based on an analysis of the instruments will be discussed. The findings will be discussed in two sections. The first section will examine the results of the interviews with ESKOM employees regarding language policy and departmental practice and the role of language in training and development. The second section will examine the results of the questionnaires issued to workers attending English literacy classes.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1. SUMMMARY:

The findings which arose from the interviews will be presented by examining language policy and departmental practice at ESKOM. Thereafter technical and non-technical training will be discussed. Finally, language initiatives in the Language Services Department will be presented. Results from the questionnaires issued to literacy trainees will be discussed in section two.

4.2. REPORT ON INTERVIEWS:

4.2.1 LANGUAGE POLICY AT ESKOM:

Eskom does not have a language policy at present, although one is in the process of being drafted. However, according to the Head of Communications, the business language is English. The Senior Advisor:Employee Training and Development affirmed "*English is our business language and that's it*". However the Head of Language Services did state that Eskom "*will accommodate other languages as well, which is perhaps why (his) department was formed*".

4.2.2 ENGLISH DOMINANCE:

Subjects were asked whether they felt that English was dominant in industry. The

Advisor: Employee Training and Development, felt :

“English is dominant - internationally as well. While I’m not saying that we mustn’t focus on the black languages, I think English is sufficient for industry.”

He commented further that black languages must be developed, but that it was not cost-effective to translate everything into eleven languages.

The Manager of the Distribution Department Call Centre, a black female, approached the question from the perspective of ethnicity. She commented that while English dominance was acceptable if it was work-related, as a black person she also used English when she communicated with black colleagues.

4.2.3 LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY EMPLOYEES AND CLIENTS:

With regard to the languages used by clients, departments are driven by their different functions. In the Distribution Department Call Centre in KZN, most clients spoke English, Afrikaans, Zulu and, to a lesser extent, Xhosa. In this regard Call Centre Agents had to use the languages of the clients. If agents did not speak the regional language, they were sent on language courses and thereafter, refresher courses whenever necessary. This was done on a voluntary basis, as well as on the recommendation of the Call Centre Manager.

The Legal Department in Gauteng had clients who spoke various national and

international languages. However, the majority of their clients were proficient in English as well, and for this reason all negotiations were done in English. If the department encountered clients speaking other national or international languages, the Department of Language Services was contacted for interpreters.

4.2.4 MULTILINGUALISM AND UPGRADING BLACK LANGUAGES:

Because of their varied functions, different departments responded differently on the issue of multilingualism and the promotion of black languages. Call Centre agents from all four race groups in the Distribution Division Call Centre for instance, dealt directly with client queries. Because of the nature of their jobs it was essential that they be multilingual, or at the very least, bilingual. When positions in the department were advertised, advertisements stated that applicants had to be willing to learn other South African languages.

The Distribution Call Centre Manager summarised:

“Agents must speak the language of the clients. It is not our policy to force English or any other language on our clients. We do not accept language or racial prejudice.”

The General Manager of the Legal Department felt that because all their legal negotiations were conducted in English, legal staff were hired for their legal ability, definitely not for their language ability.

The Head of Language Services approached the issue from an economic perspective. He stated that industry was driven by money and that industry realised the need to communicate with their audiences in the languages of their choice therefore multilingualism was profitable. However, he stated that he had not as yet been able to persuade ESKOM of the economic benefits of multilingualism. Although ESKOM appears to have the language structures and facilities in place, multilingualism is still not being implemented extensively.

With regard to focussing more on black languages in industry, the Communications Manager (KZN) felt that it was unrealistic to take multilingualism to the extreme of sending communiques out in all eleven languages, but if a document was requested in a particular language, her department tried to satisfy the customers' needs. However, statistics were not available to verify how often such requests occurred, nor could it be ascertained at that time, the outcome of cases where ESKOM had been reported to PANSALB for not complying with constitutional multilingual policy. Issues that had been reported could not be commented on because they were still at the negotiating phase. ESKOM appears to have protected itself legally with the 'English as business language' policy.

A black male Legal Advisor commented that industry was not focussing on black languages at all because it was more concerned with "*getting its affirmative action numbers right*" to spend time on developing the languages. He added:

“They are not focussing on the right issues - they are focussing on colour, and not on making the work environment suitable. Because of the increase in the number of black people in the workplace, there is a pressing need to foster communication between the majority of the staff. Emphasis must be placed on language if the target of achieving a demographic balance is to be met.”

Interestingly enough, the Legal Advisors themselves do not attend or volunteer to attend second language training.

A final comment on multilingualism was made by the Senior Advisor of Employee Training and Development:

“I think every adult South African should speak, to a fair degree the local languages, for example here in KZN it should be Zulu, but I don't think it works conducting business in any language other than English.”

4.2.5 LANGUAGES OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

Internal and external communication include departmental meetings, workshops and seminars, as well as written communication such as circulars, notices, reports, newsletters, memoranda and letters. As already mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Communications Manager (KZN) stated that communiques go out in English with a footnote that documents were available in other languages if specifically requested. The onus, however is on the receiver to make the request. She expressed concern at

the cost involved in producing documents in all eleven languages as it was not an economically feasible endeavour.

The Head of Communications (Gauteng) stated that Eskom tried to accommodate South Africa's unique position. However, where another language was the lingua franca, for example in Venda in the Northern Province, employees may converse in Venda in their departments if they so desired, but documents that were sent out to Head Office had to be in English.

The Senior Advisor in Employee Training and Development commented that even Afrikaans speakers realised that sending out documents and flyers in Afrikaans, as was the practice in the past, was not necessary. The Advisor in Employee Training and Development stated that certain reports and the results of surveys he had conducted, such as one conducted in 1998 on the training needs of engineering staff, were circulated in English and Zulu. However, such practices do not appear to be the norm.

From the perspective of Zulu mother-tongue speakers, the Distribution Call Centre Manager and the ABET Regional Manager commented that they would speak Zulu with Zulu-speaking colleagues. However, if someone in the group did not understand Zulu they would speak English. The ABET Regional Manager remarked that regionally it would actually be easier for more English speakers in the organisation to learn Zulu if the majority of people in their departments spoke the language. He used meetings as

an example, where if the majority of people present were Zulu-speaking, the process would be facilitated if the meeting could be conducted in Zulu.

4.2.6 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Training and development will be discussed from the following perspectives:

- * Technical Training
- * Non-technical Training
- * Language Training
- * Adult Basic Education and Literacy

*** TECHNICAL TRAINING:**

Although exact statistics were not available from the Senior Advisor: Employee Training and Development (Technical), technical training at ESKOM was conducted mostly in English medium. Certain courses such as Introduction to HV Rigs and Safety courses are conducted in English and Zulu medium. Overall, 8 -10% of the technical training courses were conducted in Zulu. KZN also had a high percentage of trainers who are qualified to conduct training in Zulu medium.

According to the Senior Advisor, KZN also produced certain training manuals in English and Zulu, a practice which, to his knowledge, was not followed to a large extent with regional languages in the other provinces. When writing manuals, subject matter experts and translators were consulted. A concern regarding translation was

expressed by the Senior Advisor. He felt that in certain cases it was difficult to find the Zulu equivalent for a word. The ABET Regional Manager also expressed the same concern. Sometimes a single English word could be translated into an entire sentence in Zulu. Certain equivalents were also ambiguous. For example, the Zulu equivalent for 'insulator' could refer to an insulator or a disk. Such ambiguities would only confuse trainees. Trainers were therefore attempting to standardise terminology where possible by moving to English terms. Even if a course was presented in Zulu, certain English terms would be used.

The Head of Language Services confirmed that they were at present working on a glossary of energy terms which they hoped to publish in two volumes: English/isiXhosa/ isiZulu and English/ Sesotho/ Sepedi. This was being done in an attempt to satisfy the need for the further development of the African languages.

The Legal Advisors attend training in different aspects of the Law, for example Tax and Finance, Employment Law, Insolvency, Corporate Law and Governance. Legal secretaries attend courses in Secretarial Business Management, Business Writing Skills, Meeting Procedure and Office Management. All training is conducted in English. The Legal Advisor felt that there would only be a need for training to be conducted in indigenous languages if the majority of the trainees were from an indigenous group. An Afrikaans-speaking secretary felt that it was more appropriate for training to be conducted in English as opposed to Afrikaans because "*it is easier to follow and take*

notes in English than in Afrikaans". A Zulu-speaking secretary believed that it was not necessary for courses to be conducted in black languages because "*English is an international language, which best equips you for opportunities that may come along,*" a view which seems to encapsulate that of many blacks in South Africa today, as already discussed in Chapter 2. Technical training was also conducted with Call Centre agents. Their training included language training in communication skills, interpersonal skills and telephone technique because of their direct liaison with clients over the telephone.

* **NON-TECHNICAL TRAINING:**

According to the Senior Advisor of Employee Training and Development (Non-Technical), training at ESKOM was conducted around a particular philosophy about management and leadership. Non-technical training courses included: Transformation, Vision, Managing Change, Situational Change, Thinking for success and Motivation (Appendix 4).

Courses were attended by senior supervisors and management voluntarily and on recommendation by the Training and Development department. However, according to the Senior Advisor, courses such as 'Thinking for Success' were suitable for all levels of the workforce because they could teach employees how habits and attitudes affected performance. He felt that all employees could benefit from attending, not just management. He remained confident that such training should be conducted in

English.

The Advisor: Employee Training and Development (Non- Technical) is responsible for co-ordinating, conducting and advising on non-technical Training and Development in KZN. In his opinion trainees required a good grasp of English to participate in such training. Approximately 5% of the non-technical courses were conducted in Zulu and only if specifically required, because of the level of the workforce at which they were aimed. As the Senior Advisor commented, English is necessary in training, and illustrated his statement using information technology as an example - all computer software is in English, not Zulu or Afrikaans, therefore English is the way forward in industry.

Legal secretaries also attend non-technical training such as Cross-Cultural Sharing, Time Management and Stress Management. The training was conducted in English which they felt was more beneficial to them.

* **LANGUAGE TRAINING:**

Second language courses such as Zulu were held for non-mother tongue speakers. The courses were attended over a three-month period by employees who have direct contact with Zulu mother-tongue clients. Although agents were employed for their bilingual ability, often they needed to go on language refresher courses. Xhosa for non-tongue speakers was also on offer, but the Call Centre Manager expressed concern

that her agents should not be inundated with training in too many languages simultaneously. She felt that they needed to be given time to practise newly-acquired skills. This supported the view that training should be conducted at suitable intervals.

The Senior Advisor (Non-Technical Training) commented that it was “*very optimistic*” to expect employees to use languages proficiently after only three months of training, especially if it was a second language. He commented that in his experience as a language facilitator, Fanagalo was a barrier to the acquisition of a black second language. Many learners had to first unlearn Fanagalo before they could make progress with the language, a point that was also discussed in Chapter Two.

The Language Services department in Gauteng has recently set up, among other language initiatives, a language laboratory which they hoped employees would attend voluntarily in order to achieve second language proficiency. It must also be noted that employees are not given incentives for becoming multilingual, which could perhaps explain why courses such as second-language training were usually attended by employees who require to use the languages as part of their job function.

* **LANGUAGE SERVICES:**

The Department of Language Services at ESKOM is situated in the Corporate Communication Department and can be traced back to the late 1950s when the organisation began planning a nationwide power transmission system. At that time

contracts had to be translated into the two official languages, English and Afrikaans. When ESKOM began to build large power stations in the 1970s using German technology, it had to add German to its list of translation services. During 1975, when ESKOM ventured into nuclear power generation using French technology, it became necessary to appoint a French translator. A full-time African languages translator was only appointed in 1994, in response to a growing need for translations into the African languages.

According to the Head: Language Services, the department employs seven language practitioners who are responsible for translation, interpretation and editing. The following languages are handled in-house: Afrikaans, English, French, German, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho and Sepedi. A panel of external service providers cater for the remaining local languages (isiNdebele, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda, xiTsonga).

Language Services offers the following core services: translating, editing and proof-reading of a wide range of texts, including financial, technical, legal, medical and human resource-related texts. Consecutive and simultaneous interpreting is also done. When the Communication department, for example hosted a team of African delegates in September 1999, including a French-speaking delegate, an interpreter was sent over by Language Services and all documents used during the visit were translated into French.

Consulting services are also offered by the department and consultants provide advice on language usage, language policy formulation and language training in basic Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi and English proficiency. As already stated earlier in the Findings, the department is also in the process of compiling a glossary of energy terms in two volumes: English/ isiZulu/ isiXhosa and English/ Sesotho/ Sepedi to satisfy the need for further developing the African languages. In addition, to encourage multilingualism, the department is in the process of establishing a language laboratory for Eskom employees who would like to learn an African language.

*** LITERACY AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION:**

According to the Regional Manager: Adult Basic Education and Training, employees who attend training programmes conducted in English are expected to be reasonably proficient in English. In order to promote literacy among employees, Eskom provides an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme (Appendix 5). ABET is co-ordinated under the NQF and workers at different levels of literacy are assessed and screened to establish their level of literacy before attending literacy classes. Generally they attend on a voluntary basis. Literacy classes are free of charge and are held during working hours. The courses are also certified at each level and progress reports are compiled for trainees at each level (Appendix 6).

ABET is held at 4 levels for the following skills:

Mother tongue literacy	-	14 weeks
English	-	18 weeks
Mathematics	-	16 weeks
Science and technology	-	16 weeks
On Job Training (Theory)		

With regard to literacy, the worker may decide whether s/he wants to progress from mother- tongue to English, although the Regional Manager of ABET commented that the workers are encouraged to do so. He also commented that many workers wanted to bypass mother tongue literacy and head straight on to English literacy classes. He felt strongly that it depended on the workers' reasons for attending, for example some of them only wanted to be able to read the bible. Others were motivated to follow career paths. He added that it would be interesting to monitor a group of workers attending literacy training to assess whether the training contributed to career success and promotion.

4.2.7 GENERAL COMMENTS:

Most subjects made concluding statements on the use of English in industry and the need to promote black languages:

ABET Regional Manager:

“More people need to speak regional black languages.”

Senior Advisor- Employee Training and Development:

“I think every adult South African should speak, to a fair degree, the local languages, for example, here in KwaZulu Natal it should be Zulu, but I don't think it works conducting any business in any language other than English.”

Advisor - Employee Training and Development:

“I think English is sufficient for industry. The black languages must be developed, but English is necessary throughout.”

General Manager - Legal Department:

“We have to move with the country therefore learning black languages is necessary, but shouldn't become an issue. It is necessary, for example, for Indians to learn their home language first.”

Call Centre Manager:

“Other conservative companies out there need to focus on other languages and cross-cultural differences by training staff. Whites must understand not just black languages, but black culture and where blacks are coming from. For this, training is necessary, a pre-requisite.”

It is evident from the comments made by people involved with language policy that the call is for English to be maintained in industry, especially at ESKOM. However,

emphasis is also placed on acquiring proficiency in black languages at regional level. The call is also not just for language sensitivity, but for cultural sensitivity as well.

4.3. REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES ISSUED TO LITERACY

TRAINEES:

The results of each question are presented individually. Responses that were made in Zulu were translated into English. Section A (Personal Details) has already been reported on in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4.2), where the subjects were discussed. In order to protect the confidentiality of individuals who participated in the study, pseudonyms have been used.

SECTION B: LANGUAGE USAGE:

QUESTION 1: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF LITERACY TRAINEES

Table 4 reflects the trainees' ability to read, write, speak and understand the 11 official languages. All figures are presented as percentages, with the number of respondents being 16 (n=16).

TABLE 4: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF LITERACY TRAINEES

	READ	WRITE	SPEAK	UNDERSTAND
1. Sesotho	6.25	0	0	12.25
2. Setswana	0	0	0	6.25
3. Sepedi	0	0	0	0
4. Siswati	6.25	0	6.25	18.75
5. isiNdebele	0	0	0	6.25
6. tsiVenda	0	0	0	6.25
7. xiTsonga	0	0	0	0
8. Afrikaans	6.25	0	12.25	12.25
9. English	62.5	56.25	50	75
10. isiXhosa	18.75	18.75	18.75	37.5
11. isiZulu	100	68.75	100	100

Table 4 is presented graphically as Appendix 7. 100% of the respondents report to being able to read, speak and understand Zulu, but only 68.75% claim to be able to write the language. With regard to English, 62,5% of the respondents can read the language, while 75% can understand it and 50% can speak it. The results demonstrate that the trainees are more proficient in the regional languages, English and Zulu. Setswana, tsiVenda and xiTsonga, for example, are hardly spoken, written or read. It is interesting that Afrikaans, which was one of the two official languages during the apartheid era, is only understood by 12.5% of the trainees and cannot be written by any of them.

QUESTION 2: ENGLISH PROFICIENCY:

The trainees rated their English proficiency (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) in terms of very well, well, not so well and not at all. The results are depicted in Table 5, which appears graphically as Appendix 8.

TABLE 5: RATING OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

	VERY WELL	WELL	NOT SO WELL	NOT AT ALL
1. Read	31.25	18.75	37.5	12.5
2. Write	31.25	25	31.25	12.5
3. Speak	25	31.25	18.75	25
4. Understand	18.75	37.5	31.25	12.5

31.25% of the trainees claim to be able to read and write English very well, 25% claim to speak it very well and 18.75% understand it very well. 12.5% maintain they cannot read, write or understand English at all, while 25% cannot speak the language at all. The majority of the trainees admit to having proficiency in English, even if they have not rated it very highly.

QUESTION 3: LANGUAGES USED IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS:

Trainees were asked which languages they used most during five everyday situations such as banking, shopping and socialising with family and friends. Table 6 reflects their responses:

TABLE 6: LANGUAGES USED MOST FREQUENTLY

	MOSTLY ZULU	MOSTLY ENGLISH	OTHER
1. With family and friends	100	0	0
2. With other workers	87.5	12.5	0
3. With supervisors, foremen	56.25	43.75	0
4. In banks, building societies	50.0	50.0	0
5. Shopping	81.25	18.75	0

All the trainees maintained that they use Zulu with their family and friends. The majority (87.5%) also claim to use Zulu with their fellow workers. A small majority (56.25%) claim to use Zulu with their supervisors, implying that their supervisors understand Zulu. 43.75% used English with supervisors, although only 25% claimed to be very proficient in speaking English in Question 2. The remaining trainees may be interpreted as using what English they are able to speak if their supervisors do not speak Zulu. Half of the trainees use English in banks and building societies, while half use Zulu. A large majority claimed to use Zulu when shopping (81.25%), however the question did not specify whether shopping included, for example, large departmental stores where English is required, or spaza shops and pavement stands where Zulu may be used. This may have influenced the results.

SECTION C: ENGLISH LITERACY CLASSES:

QUESTION 1: PERIOD OF TIME LITERACY CLASSES HAVE BEEN ATTENDED:

The trainees have been attending classes for various periods of time: 3 (18.75%) have been attending for less than a month, 1 (6.25%) for 2 months, 2 (12.5%) for 3 months, 1 (6.25%) for 7 months, 7 (43.75%) for a year, 1 (6.25%) for 2 years and 1 (6.25%) has been attending for 3 years. The fact that trainees have been attending for varied periods of time could have influenced results on proficiency.

QUESTION 2: ON WHOSE RECOMMENDATION DID TRAINEES ATTEND LITERACY CLASSES?

Table 7 reflects who recommended that the trainees attend literacy classes. In two cases (6 and 7), trainees were recommended by more than one person:

TABLE 7: RECOMMENDATION FOR LITERACY CLASSES

1. Friends	6.25
2. Family	6.25
3. Trainers	18.75
4. Supervisors	25
5. Decided for myself	31.25
6. Supervisor + self	6.25
7. Friends+ family + self	6.25

More trainees claim to have decided for themselves that literacy is necessary

(31.25%). Some claim that trainers (18.75%) and supervisors (25%) also played a role in encouraging them to attend. A small percentage of trainees claim that they were encouraged by family and friends.

QUESTION 3: IMPROVEMENT IN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY:

Table 8 reflects the results to the question on how much trainees felt their English had improved since attending. The table is reflected graphically as Appendix 9:

TABLE 8: ENGLISH IMPROVEMENT

1. A lot	18.75
2. A little	75
3. Not at all	6.25

The majority of trainees felt that their English had improved a little (75%). However, it must be noted that trainees had been attending for various periods of time, ranging from under one month to 3 years. Trainees who belong to the former category could be responsible for the “no improvement” category. Conversely, trainees who felt that their English had improved a lot could have been attending in the 2-3 year category.

QUESTION 4: REASONS FOR ATTENDING:

Trainees had different reasons for attending classes. These reasons are revealed in Table 9:

TABLE 9: REASONS FOR ATTENDING LITERACY CLASSES

	MOST IMPORTANT	NOT SO IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT
1. Get a better job	68.75	0	0
2. Earn more money	50	0	0
3. Attend other training in English	68.75	0	0
4. Better myself	81.25	0	0
5. Improve my qualifications	56.25	0	6.25
6. Communicate in English	62.5	6.25	12.5

The most important reason provided by the group of trainees (81.25%) was to better themselves. This reason could also have encapsulated others such as “getting a better job” or “improving my qualifications”. Many trainees (68.75%) also found it important to get a better job and to attend other training in English medium. 6.25% commented that they felt the least important reason for attending literacy training was to improve qualifications, while 12.25% considered it least important to communicate in English.

SECTION D: GENERAL TRAINING:

QUESTIONS 1 AND 2: PREVIOUS TRAINING:

68.75% of the trainees had attended other types of training previously, while 31.25% had not. Training attended included courses in First Aid, Safety, Line Worker Training, Cooking, Fire Fighting, HV Resistors and Zulu.

QUESTION 3: LANGUAGE OF TRAINING:

As a group, the trainees claimed that 56.25% of the training attended had been conducted in English. 31.25% stated they attended training conducted in Zulu. 12.25% was conducted in dual- medium, English and Zulu.

QUESTION 4: UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF TRAINING:

Of those who attended English-medium training, 31.25% understood the training and 50% had understood very little. 18.75% did not respond to the question. It is assumed that trainees have been attending English-medium training but not benefitting from it. In such instances it may be assumed that training is not justified. Trainees would have benefitted more from Zulu-medium training at that stage, or from more intensive English training before attending such programmes. The interview with the ABET Regional Manager (as discussed earlier in the Findings) revealed that trainees should be relatively proficient in English to be able to attend training in English medium. This does not appear to have been adhered to in practice.

QUESTION 5: WHO DO YOU INFORM IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE MEDIUM TRAINING IS CONDUCTED IN?

87.5% responded that they informed trainers.

18.75% stated that they informed supervisors.

25% informed other workers.

While most trainees are proactive if they do not understand the medium, it is the 25%

who only inform other workers that presents a problem. Supervisors and trainers need feedback from trainees in order to design and implement programmes and such feedback should be compulsory.

QUESTION 6: PREFERRED LANGUAGE OF TRAINING:

62.5% preferred training to be conducted in English.

25% preferred training to be conducted in Zulu .

12.5% preferred dual-medium, English and Zulu training.

According to the results of Section B: Question 3, Zulu is used most often by the majority of the trainees in everyday situations. In addition, although 50% of the trainees did not understand training conducted in English, it is interesting that the majority felt they needed English.

The reasons given by some of the trainees for preferring English-medium training are as follows:

M. Dlamini: *Because we have to communicate with whites.*

J. Ngara: *It (English) is used in my work.*

B. Mthiyane: *If I want to talk to my supervisor about something.*

S. Mabaso: *English is for communicating.*

B. Zuma: *English is international.*

D. Buthelezi: *It is easy.*

F. Shezi: *To get a better job and more money.*

Some of the reasons given for Zulu medium training follow:

J. Langa: *It is the only language I speak and write.*

S.Makhubu: *It is my language - I like it.*

B.Dlomo: *Zulu is used everywhere.*

The trainees who preferred dual-medium English-Zulu training had this to say:

Z. Goba: *So blacks and whites can stay together. It will help us.*

A. Ndlovu: *To help us in the courses we are doing.*

It is apparent that trainees have various reasons for the medium they prefer training to be conducted in, but what is obvious is that even if many do not understand English well, they still feel the language is necessary.

QUESTION 7: THE LANGUAGE USED BY SUPERVISORS:

7.1 In response to the question "Do your supervisors speak your language?" the following was revealed:

56.25% stated that supervisors understood Zulu.

25% stated that they did not.

12.5% said that supervisors spoke only a little Zulu. 6.25% did not answer the question.

7.2 In response to the question “Is it important that supervisors speak your language?” trainees indicated the following:

50% indicated that it is important for supervisors to speak Zulu.

43.75% felt that it is not important.

6.25% did not answer the question.

Therefore, while trainees want more training conducted in English, half of them believe that supervisors should also speak their language.

7.3 Trainees were asked to explain why they responded as they did in question 7.2.

The reasons given by some of the trainees for why it is important for Supervisors to speak Zulu follow:

J. Langa: *To see what is right and wrong.*

S.Makhubu: *Or Zulu will finish (die).*

B. Dlomo: *It is important for me to speak their language and they must speak my language.*

Z. Goba: *It is an important language in South Africa.*

A. Ndlovu: *Then we can talk and understand each other.*

Reasons given why it is not important for supervisors to speak Zulu:

M.Dlamini: *That language is not spoken in the office.*

F. Shezi: *They can use any language they want.*

S. Mabaso: *I must speak English like the supervisor because he can't understand*

me.

B. Zuma: *My language is not international.*

B. Mthiyane: *English is international.*

QUESTION 8: FINAL COMMENTS:

Trainees were asked to make final comments about language in the workplace:

M. Dlamini: *We must communicate in the workplace.*

D. Buthelezi: *I like English in the workplace.*

B. Dłomo: *The law says you have (12) languages in South Africa, but in ESKOM we only have two, English and Afrikaans.*

Z. Goba: *English and Zulu are better - not only English.*

S.Makhubu: *I like to know English, but others must know my language.*

B.Zuma: *A lot of people don't understand Zulu, if everyone speaks English it's OK.*

J. Langa: *We must make Zulu the first language.*

It is evident that while some trainees want to use English at work, others want to use Zulu. One trainee in particular would like to see English and Zulu being used. An interesting comment was made by B. Dłomo, although he misquoted the number of official languages (12 instead of 11), that English and Afrikaans are dominant at ESKOM. A key area of this study is English dominance at ESKOM, however, it is beyond the confines of this report to include much focus on Afrikaans in the study. It

is important to look at the conclusions that can be drawn from the investigation. These conclusions appear in Chapter 5, which follows. Recommendations based on the findings of the study will also be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

The findings of the interviews and questionnaires reflect language practice in specific departments at ESKOM. The findings can therefore not be generalised as being applicable throughout the organisation. Conclusions and recommendations that are pertinent to the relevant departments will be discussed and may apply to other departments in the organisation. Limitations of the study will also be discussed and suggestions for further research will be made.

5.1. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The study must be considered in terms of ESKOM's mission, which is to support employment equity and encourage employees to develop to their full potential through training. It is in this context that the following conclusions and recommendations are made:

5.1.1 LANGUAGE POLICY:

ESKOM does not have a language policy, although it has a language practice. that the business language is English. The organisation appears to be proactive with regard to language issues by setting up structures such as Language Services to encourage multilingualism within the organisation. However, setting up organisational structures does not necessarily mean that a *practice* of multilingualism is being advocated within

departments. ESKOM appears to be contradicting its stance by using English as the business language on the one hand, then creating structures to promote multilingualism on the other.

What is essential but lacking, is language policy. A well-defined language policy promoting functional multilingualism would clarify language issues that are problematic, such as the tendency towards monolingualism, the low status of black languages and the language of training and development. It is essential for an organisation as vast as ESKOM to be able to define its company practices in the form of policy.

5.1.2 MULTILINGUALISM:

The Constitution and the Employment Equity Act of 1998 stipulate multilingualism as a means of ensuring equity. From the responses received from interviewees it is evident that English is the dominant language used in the organisation, despite its mission to promote equity. While other forms of equity, such as affirmative action may be promoted within the organisation, language equity is still not being maintained. The majority of interviewees felt that English was sufficient for ESKOM's business requirements. However, in order to promote multilingualism in accordance with Constitutional requirements it is essential for the organisation to commit to encouraging the use of black languages among all employees. While several arguments have been put forward regarding the difficulty and expense involved in using eleven

languages, a system of regional language acquisition could be advocated. Many black employees also appear to be in favour of using English because it is international and ensures progress. However, the cost of losing a language and culture is an immense price to pay in the long run if the black languages are marginalised any further. One must also bear in mind, as discussed in Chapter Two, that English is not the only international language, as many assume.

In the two departments studied, employees at the Call Centre were required to speak the languages of their clients, including English, Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans. Employees in the Legal department used English because this was the language understood by the majority of their clients. Bilingualism, at the very least is essential in departments such as the Call Centre, but departments such as the Legal Department conducted most of their business in English. Multilingualism should not be limited to specific departments. All employees should be encouraged to become, if not multilingual, at least bilingual in the regional languages.

The language of internal and external communication at ESKOM is English. The LANGTAG report (1996) recommends that while English may be the working language, it should not be rigidly enforced for the purpose of intra-departmental communication. With regard to external communication, clients may request that documents are sent to them in a language of their choice. It could not be ascertained during the course of the study how often such requests were made. ESKOM needs to

consult with its clients regularly to ascertain their needs. To promote equity it is vital that ESKOM consider including all major documents such as reports in at least two regional languages.

To encourage employees to use regional languages, non-mother tongue speakers should be encouraged to attend language courses to acquire the second language. Employees attending such courses do so at present on a voluntary basis and do not receive incentives for language acquisition. It is recommended that employees be given incentives for becoming multilingual, for example by using multilingualism as a criterion for promotion. Language courses should also be certificated nationally.

Multilingualism is a vital economic resource and should be promoted as such in South Africa. It is therefore essential that large organisations such as ESKOM not just promote multilingualism, but ensure it. Although ESKOM has the organisational structures to promote multilingualism, it is imperative that these facilities be utilised effectively.

5.1.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Training is costly. It is therefore critical that training programmes not be seen in terms of productivity alone. According to the HSRC/NTB Investigation on communication in the workplace (1989:10), blacks preferred to use English because it enabled them

to communicate with a wider range of people and improved promotion prospects. The majority of technical training courses at ESKOM are conducted in English with a small percentage being conducted in regional black languages. Training manuals are written in English. A small percentage of bilingual manuals is available in English-Zulu in KZN, but this is not necessarily a national practice. The majority of non-technical training courses are also conducted in English medium. Of the 16 literacy trainees who were issued with questionnaires, 50% stated that when training was conducted in English, they did not understand it well, which in effect defeats the purpose of training.

According to Oakley (1980) and van Niekerk (1982) in the HSRC/NTB Investigation (1989), employees can only benefit from training and development if it is conducted in the language employees understand best. Van der Vyver, et al (1983:9) also ascertained that for training to be successful, the trainer and trainee should have a common medium of communication. Where training is conducted in English, employees need to develop the necessary skills in English before attending training in English medium. More training should also be offered in black languages until employees gain the necessary skills in English, so as not to place any employee at a disadvantage. It is suggested that regular needs analyses be conducted to establish whether training actually meets the language needs of the employees.

5.1.4 LANGUAGE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Language training is conducted in the form of second language courses for non

mother-tongue speakers, as well as at ABET level in English and mother-tongue literacy. As stated in the Findings, language training is attended on a voluntary or recommended basis. Language courses are not compulsory, nor do employees get incentives for attending them. For optimal effectiveness, language courses should not be taught in isolation. To be meaningful they must be taught within the context of the job requirements. Managers must be able to make an input with regard to employees' requirements. Employees must also be consulted to make their needs known. It is therefore recommended that a thorough language needs analysis be conducted in each department before language courses and materials are designed.

Second language training should not be restricted to workers acquiring English proficiency. Effective communication (such as negotiations, instructions and discussions) between supervisors and workers is essential to the productivity of any organisation. Ineffective communication can lead to accidents, worker disputes, delays in the completion of tasks and cross-cultural misunderstandings (van der Vyver 1983:30). Training courses should also sensitise employees to cultural differences. While it is commendable that workers attend literacy classes, it is equally important for supervisors to attend courses in regional black languages as well in order to narrow the language gap. The discussion of the literacy questionnaires will contribute to this discussion.

5.1.5 LANGUAGE INITIATIVES:

ESKOM is making attempts to bridge the language gap and to encourage multilingualism in the form of its Language Services department. Language proficiency courses that are offered by the department are attended on a voluntary basis. The department has also established a language laboratory where employees can practise their language skills. However, the laboratory has only recently been established and is not yet being fully utilised. In order to encourage multilingualism, it is recommended that courses conducted by Language Services also be accredited. The department is also in the process of compiling glossaries of multilingual technical terms. Such enterprises should be promoted at other organisations, as well as tertiary institutions offering engineering courses. ESKOM has much to offer and should take a proactive role in the country by assisting smaller enterprises to establish similar language initiatives and programmes.

5.1.6 ABET AND LITERACY:

Much of the training that literacy trainees had previously undergone was conducted in English medium. Half of the trainees reported to not being able to understand training very well when it is conducted in English. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that trainees can understand the medium of training. In the event that they are not sufficiently literate in English, Zulu- medium training should be compulsory. In the interim, it should be made compulsory for all employees who are not literate to attain a reasonable level of literacy.

It is also interesting that, according to the trainees, many of the supervisors do not speak the language of the workers. One is inclined to expect the opposite to be true, especially in post-apartheid South Africa. While it is important for workers to become proficient in English, it is equally important for supervisors to acquire the language of the workers in order to narrow the language gap.

5.2 SUMMARISED RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are made in summary:

- * that ESKOM formulate a language policy in keeping with Constitutional requirements and its mission to support equity.
- * that a system of functional multilingualism be adopted.
- * that the languages of internal and external communication include a minimum of two regional languages.
- * that all employees be encouraged to attend second language training.
- * that supervisors learn the language of the workers in order to narrow the language gap.
- * that literacy training be made compulsory for all employees who are not literate.
- * that language training be conducted in conjunction with occupational requirements, and not in isolation.
- * that components on cultural awareness and sensitivity be included in language training programmes.

- * that employees receive incentives for attending language training.
- * that training programmes and course materials be regularly evaluated and revised to suit the changing needs of workers.
- * that regular needs analyses of clients' and employees' language requirements be conducted.

5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study focussed on language practice in two departments. It is limiting to draw conclusions and make recommendations in the light of these departments alone. If one is considering the formulation of policy, then the organisation must be studied as a whole.

With regard to research methodology, interviews were conducted with key personnel in the departments, as well as with Training Co-ordinators and Advisors, Communications Managers and ABET personnel. A more comprehensive picture could have emerged if more trainees were interviewed. Workers attending literacy training were issued with questionnaires. Having the questionnaires available in English and Zulu proved to be very helpful, however, trainees were at different levels of proficiency. Those who were not very proficient in English or Zulu could have experienced difficulty answering the questionnaires, which could have influenced the results. Fortunately this did not prove to be a problem, however under such circumstances, group interviews with workers may have been helpful. Pre- and post-

training interviews could also have resulted in a more comprehensive study.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

With South Africa's recent entry into the global market, it is critical at this point of the country's development to examine language issues in industry. While ESKOM is attempting to bridge the language gap, there is a need for more comprehensive studies including:

- * an evaluation of existing language and literacy training programmes.
- * the updating and creation of new language programmes, including components on cross-cultural awareness.
- * an examination of languages spoken by all employees at ESKOM.
- * an analysis of the language needs of ESKOM employees and clients.
- * an analysis of the cost involved in establishing more training programmes in regional black languages.
- * the cost of using regional languages in external communications with clients where necessary.
- * the cost involved in compulsory literacy training for all non-literate employees.

While large organisations such as ESKOM have the organisational structures, the resources and the finance to promote multilingualism through training and development, many small, micro- and medium enterprises may not. It is therefore vital

that similar studies be conducted in smaller organisations to examine language policy and practice. A further issue that requires attention is an investigation into the attitudes of Afrikaans speakers, since their language is not being used as extensively as it used to. It is equally important that language issues, such as complaints directed via PANSALB, for instance, be publicised in order to increase public awareness of language rights.

Because language is considered an economic resource (LANGTAG Report 1996), organisations in the country must begin to implement Constitutional requirements. If multilingualism is not being practised, then the Constitution remains just a set of words, and South Africa is not the democratic nation it claims to be.

5.5 CONCLUSION:

Language is not just a tool for communication, if it were it would not be such an emotive issue. At present there is a mismatch between Constitutional language policy and actual language practice in South African industry, if the study at ESKOM is reflective of language practices in industries in the greater South Africa. South African language policy promotes multilingualism, but speakers are using English more and more. Many black South Africans are opting to use English rather than their indigenous languages because they see English as the key to better jobs. Quite simply, it is a fight for survival. As Maartens (1998:35) comments, it is only if South Africa's leadership is seen to take pride in all South African languages, and only if people are rewarded for

their knowledge of a variety of languages in terms of jobs and status, can language practice reflect language policy. South Africa is fast becoming a monolingual nation, but at what cost? The loss of indigenous languages and culture is a high price to pay and without multilingualism in South Africa there can be no development in that sphere. Insisting on English denies South Africans their Constitutional right to their mother-tongue. The focus on language in training and development programmes is one form of redress that can be promoted via the implementation of the Skills Development Act, ensuring at least a degree of language equity. In the words of Alexander (Maartens 1998:35),

“No nation has ever thrived or reached great heights of economic or cultural development if the vast majority of its people are compelled to communicate in a second language.”

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. PERSONAL DETAILS:

S/NAME, FIRST NAME:

AGE: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69

GENDER: M F

HOME LANGUAGE.....

DEPARTMENT:.....

POSITION IN DEPT:.....

RESPONSIBILITIES:

LENGTH OF SERVICE IN ORGANISATION.....

B. GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL QUESTIONS:

1. Who are your clients?.....
2. What languages do they generally use to communicate with you?.....
3. What is/are the language/s of communication in your job?
 - * Internally (meetings, circulars, notices, reports, etc).....
 - * Externally (other orgs., negotiations, trade unions, etc).....
 - * Nationally (Africa).....
 - * Internationally.....
4. What languages do you receive communication in?.....
5. Does ESKOM have a language policy?.....

C. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

C1. TRAINING CO-ORDINATION:

1. What role does Training and Development play at ESKOM?.....
2. Are needs analyses conducted? If so, by whom?.....

3. What training courses are being conducted at present?.....
4. How often are courses conducted?.....
5. What is the average attendance per course?.....
6. Is training voluntary, recommended or compulsory?.....
7. Do trainees attend on their own time/ given time off?.....
8. Does management attend?.....
9. Do you receive feedback from trainees and trainers?.....
10. How do trainees generally respond to language courses?.....
12. Which languages are most popular?.....
13. Do you feel that courses should be offered in all SA languages/ international languages?
Elaborate.....

C2. GENERAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENTAL)

1. Do employees undergo language proficiency tests?.....
2. Is Training and Development compulsory, recommended or voluntary at this time?.....
3. Do employees receive incentives for attending training courses (promotions,etc)?

C3. TECHNICAL TRAINING:

1. What are some of the technical courses offered ?.....
2. What level of the workforce are they geared towards?.....
3. What languages are they conducted in?.....

4. Do trainees have to be fluent in English to participate in these courses?
5. Are interpretation/ translation facilities available?
6. What languages are manuals, notes, etc. available in?.....
7. What criteria are trainers selected on?.....

C4. NON-TECHNICAL COURSES:

1. Provide a few examples of non-technical courses
2. What language courses are available?.....
3. On what basis are the languages selected?.....
4. Who are the courses geared towards (In terms of position in the company, ethnic group, etc.)?
Does management attend?.....
5. Who designs the courses?.....
6. What skills do the courses focus on?.....
 - * Reading
 - * Verbal- presentations, etc.
 - * Conversational
 - * Writing- correspondence
 - * Intercultural communication.....
 - * Other(specify)
7. What forms of assessment do you use?.....

C5. ABET AND LITERACY TRAINING:

1. Who attends literacy classes?.....
2. Is literacy compulsory, recommended or voluntary?.....
3. Where and when are classes held? Are workers paid while attending?.....

4. What materials are used?.....
5. What is the duration of courses?.....
6. Is mother-tongue and English literacy offered?.....
7. Does attaining literacy assist workers get promotions, etc.?.....

D. CONCLUDING QUESTIONS:

1. Are you interested in learning other local or international languages? Why? Which languages are you interested in learning?.....
2. At present English appears to be the dominant language in industry. How do you feel about the use of English at ESKOM?.....
3. South Africa has a multilingual language policy. Do you feel the black languages are being focussed on sufficiently in industry? Why?.....
4. How do you feel the black languages can be promoted at ESKOM?.....
5. Do you have any concluding remarks or suggestions about language in industry?

Thank you for your time.

8. Afrikaans				
9. English				
10. IsiNdebele				
11. IsiXhosa				
12. IsiZulu				

2. With regard to **ENGLISH** I am able to (Please tick the relevant column):

	VERY WELL	WELL	NOT SO WELL	NOT AT ALL
1. Read				
2. Write				
3. Speak				
4. Understand				

3. What language do you use when you are: (tick the best answer or specify other):

	MOSTLY ZULU	MOSTLY ENGLISH	OTHER (SPECIFY LANGUAGE)
1. With family and friends			
2. With other workers			
3. With supervisors/foremen			
4. At banks, building societies, etc.			
5. Shopping			

SECTION C: ENGLISH LITERACY CLASSES:

1. How long have you been attending English literacy classes?.....
2. Who recommended that you attend these classes?(Please tick)

1. Friends	
2. Family	
3. Trainers	
4. Supervisor	
5. Decided for myself	
6. Other (specify)	
.....	
.....	

3. Has your English improved since you started attending classes?(Please tick the most appropriate answer)

A lot	
A little	
Not at all	

4. I am attending literacy classes because I want to: (Tick the best answer)

	MOST IMPORTANT	NOT SO IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT
1. Get a better job			
2. Earn more money			
3. Attend other training in English			
4. Better myself			
5. Improve my qualifications			
6. Communicate in English			

Nothing	
Other(Specify).....	

6.1 If you were given a choice, what language would you like training to be conducted in?

.....

6.2 Why?.....

.....

7.1 Do your supervisors at work speak your language?

YES NO A LITTLE

7.2 Do you think it is important that they do speak your language?.....

7.3 Why?.....

.....

8. Any other comments you would like to make about language in the workplace.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

7. IsiTSONGA				
8. IsiBBUNU				
9. IsiNGISI				
10. IsiNDEBELE				
11. IsiXHOSA				
12. IsiZULU				

2. Ngokwe Singisi ngikwazi (khetha kokungezansi):

	KAHLE KAKHULU	KAHLE	IMBIJANE	NHLOBO
1. UKUFUNDA				
2. UKUBHALA				
3. UKUKHULUMA				
4. UKUZWA				

3. Yituphi ulwini olusebezisayo uma (khetha kokugezansi):

	IKAKHULUKAZI ISIZULU	IKAKHULUKAZI ISINGISI	OLUNYE ULWINI (NGICELA UCACISE)
1. UNABANGANI NEZIHLOBO			
2. NABANYE ABASEBENZI			
3. NEMFOLO MANI			
4. EBHANGE, NJALO NJALO			
5. EZITOLO			

ISIGABA C: IZIFUNDO ZOKUTHUTHUKISA ULWINI LWESINGISI:

1. Sekuyisikhathi esingakanani ungena amakilasi esiNgisi?.....

2. Ubani owakugqugquzela ukuthi uthathe lamakilasi (khetha ngezansi):

1. Abangani	
2. Abomndeni	
3. Abaqeqeshi	
4. Umphathi	
5. Ngazikhethela	
6.Okunye.....	

3. Ingabe izinga lakho lokukhuluma isiNgisi selithuthukile enva kokuthatha lezizifundo?

Kakhulu	
inbijane	
nhlobo	

4. Ngenza lezizifundo ngoba ngifuna (khetha impendulo ngezansi):

	KUBALULEKI LE KAKHULU	AKUBALU LEKILE KAKHULU	KUBALULEKE KANCANE
1. Ukuthola umsebenzi ongcono			
2. Ukhuthola imali engcono			
3. Ukuthola okunye ukuqeqeshwa ngesiNgisi			
4. Ukuzithuthukisa			

5. Ukwenyusa izinga lolwazi			
6. Ukuxhumana ngesiNgisi			
7. Okunye (cacisa).....			

ISIGABA D: IMININGWANE NGOKUQEQQESHA:

1. Wake wakuthola ukuqeqeshwa okunye ngaphambili?

YEBO

CHA

2. Uma impendulo ngenhla ithi yebo, yisho ukuthi yiluphi uhlobo lokuqeqeshwa owaluthola?

.....
.....
.....

3. Kwenziwa ngaluphi ulwini lokhukuqeqeshwa?(Khetha ngezansi)

IsiNGISI	
IsiZULU	
EZINYE IZILIMI (CACISA).....	

4. Uyakhona ukuzwama uqeqeshwa ngesiNgisi?

YEBO

CHA

INWANISA

KANCANE

5. Uma unenkinga ngolwini oqeqeshwa ngalo, uyaye wenze njani ngalokho?

Ngitshela umqeqeshi	
ngitshela umphathi emsebenzini	
Ngistshela ozakwethu	
Lutho	
Okunye(cacisa).....	

6.1 Uma bewuendlela, yiluphi ulwimi ongathanda ukuqeqeshwa ngalo?.....

.....

6.2 Ngobani (chaza)?.....

.....

7.1 Ingabe abaphathi bakho emsebenzini bakhuluma ulwini lwakho?

YEBO

CHA

KANCANE

7.2 Ukubona kubalulekile ukuthi bakwazi ukukhuluma ulwini lwakho?.....

.....

7.3

Ngobani(chaza)?.....

.....

8. Ingabe kukhona ofisa ukukusho ugolwini emsebenzini?.....

.....

Ngibonga isikhathi nesineke sakho.

Key workshops have been identified which will address some of the capability gaps

Workshops

What it is

Transformation
Capacity Overview

The understanding of leader behaviour required for success during transformation. The knowledge required to compile a "people change plan" which will mesh with the overall transformation plan

Vision

The knowledge required to construct a relevant and compelling vision for your unit aligning with the Distribution vision. Why change? From what to what? And effect?

Managing Change
Reactions

Understanding how people react to change and applying strategies to manage self and others successfully through change

Situational
Leadership

The ability to choose a leadership style consistent with the maturity of the individual in a given task situation

Thomas PPA

The competence and tools to understand the needs, motivators, values, limitations and fears of each team member and adjust interactions and leadership accordingly

Thinking for Success

The ability to engage success thought processes and to influence others to do so

Motivation

The practical application of proven motivation theory to create an environment conducive to superior performance

The plan is to roll these out to all leaders over a 2 year period.

ABET

What is it?

Adult Basic Education and Training is the mandate approved by the Management Board on 22 April 1997. This new mandate is the extension of ABD (Adult Basic Development) and will emphasise the integration of Education and Training. It will also align industry based training to National standards.

ABET, as a presidentially led process will be co-ordinated under the National Qualification Framework (NQF), alongside formal schooling and other Industry Based Training Programmes.

HOW DOES ABD DIFFER FROM ABET?

ABD	ABET
Level 1 - Mother Tongue	- Mother Tongue
Level 2 - Survival English	- English
Basic Numeracy	- Maths
Level 3 - Conversational English	- Science & Technology
Intermediate Numeracy	- On Job Training (Theory)

Levels 1 - 4

HOW DO I BECOME AN ABET LEARNER?

One needs to be screened to be an ABET learner. Screening is not a test but an assessment used to help identify the level one belongs to.

WHO DOES THE SCREENING & WHERE IS IT DONE?

You will be screened by ABET facilitators and co-ordinators in your region. Screening can be done at your workplace or at ABET learning centres in your area.

HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO PAY?

You do not pay any fees to be an ABET learner. Eskom offers you the opportunity to be taught during working hours.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Accommodation and meals will be provided for all learners at learning centres.

PTO for enrolment form

APPENDIX 5

THE PROGRAMME

2 WEEKS	4 WEEKS	6 WEEKS	6 WEEKS	Computer Literacy	Financial
2 WEEKS	ABD 3 6 WEEKS	ABD 3 4 WEEKS	4 WEEKS	Health	Maintenance
2 WEEKS	ABD 2 6 WEEKS	ABD 2 4 WEEKS	4 WEEKS	Safety	Operating
ABD 1 8 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	2 WEEKS	Business Education	Commercial
Mother Tongue 14 WEEKS	English 18 WEEKS	Maths 16 WEEKS	Science & Technology 16 WEEKS	Eskom Themes (Integrated)	Administration
					Career Specific

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

GENERIC SKILLS

SPECIALISATION SKILLS

ABET KZN LEARNER PROGRESS REPORT

LEARNING CENTRE: _____ AREA: _____ BLOCK: _____ START: _____ END DATE: _____

LEARNER'S NAME: _____ UNIQUE NO.: _____ WORK STATION: _____

DIX 6

COMMUNICATION LEARNING OUTCOMES (ENGLISH) LEVEL 3	M	HC	C	T	U	COMMENTS
Establish and maintain relationships with others in various contexts.						
Request and respond to similar request for assistance.						
Ask for, give and respond to directions and/or instructions.						
Give and get information.						
Express and defend opinions, feelings and self respond to other during interactions.						
Identify the main message and purpose of a text.						
Search for specific information in a text.						
Read and respond critically to the text.						
Share experiences and/or opinion in written form.						
Select, organise and present specific information to the particular purposes.						
Produce different types of texts according to purpose of the communication.						
Organise activities, make arrangements and conclude transactions in writing.						
Complete a variety of forms.						
Oral						
Project						
Written assessment.						

FINAL RESULT: _____ PASS% : _____ TOTAL DAYS ATTENDED : _____

REMARKS: _____

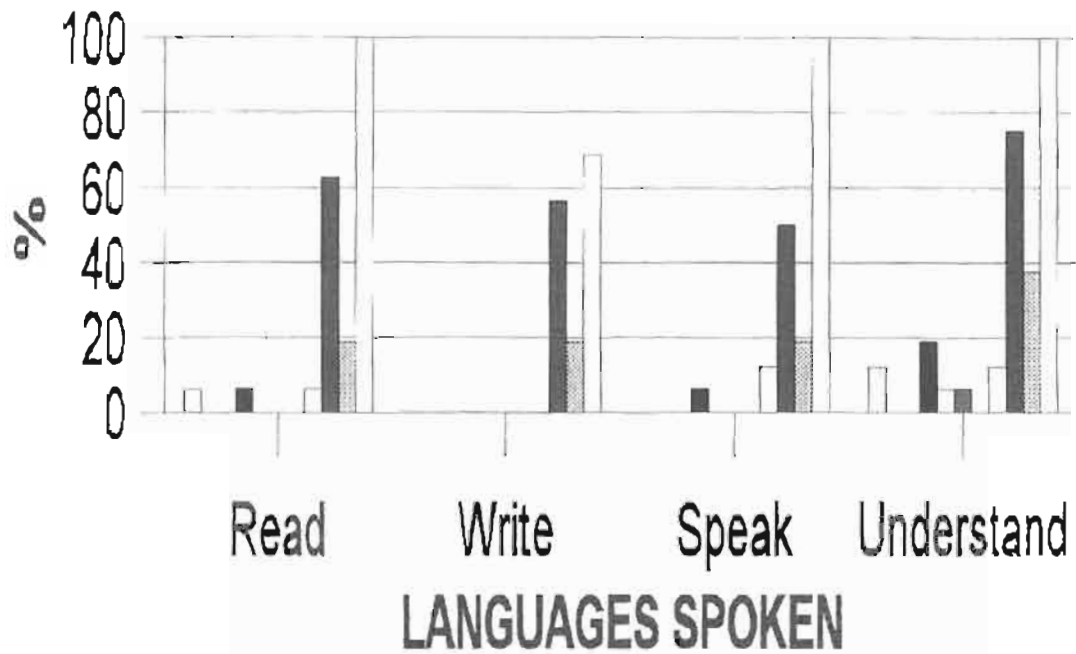
ABET PRACTITIONER: _____

DATE: _____ CO-ORDINATOR: _____

LEGEND: M-MERIT (80-100%) HC-HIGHER CREDIT (70-79%) C-CREDIT (50-69%) T-THRESHOLD (40-49%) U-UNGRADED (0-39%)

APPENDIX 7

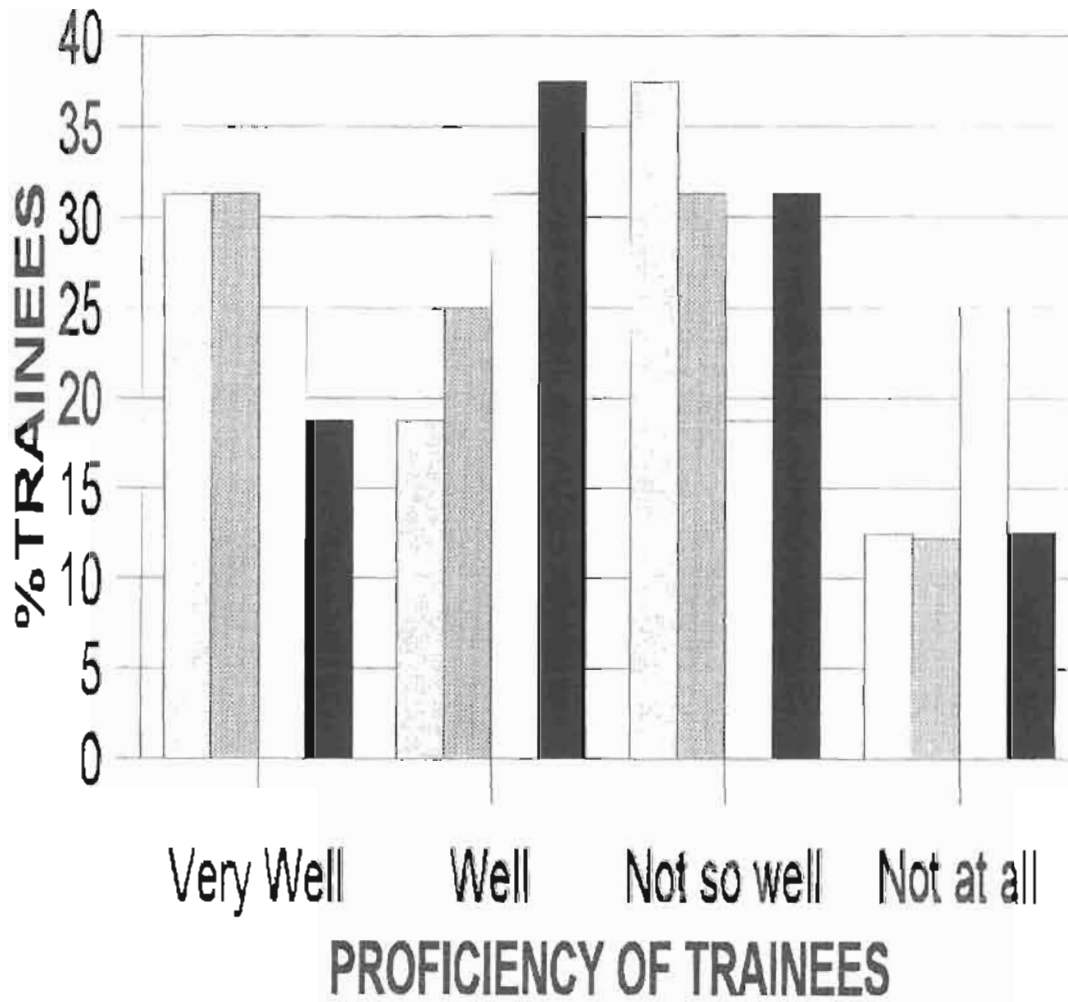
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY



- | | | | |
|---|------------|---|-----------|
|  | Sesotho |  | Setswana |
|  | Sepedi |  | Siswati |
|  | isiNdebele |  | tsiVenda |
|  | xiTsonga |  | Afrikaans |
|  | English |  | isiXhosa |
|  | Zulu | | |

APPENDIX 8

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY



- Read
- Write
- Speak
- Understand

APPENDIX 9

ENGLISH IMPROVEMENT

