

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY AND ATTITUDES
OF LEARNERS, EDUCATORS AND PARENTS TOWARDS
ENGLISH OR/AND ISIZULU AS THE LANGUAGE OF
LEARNING AND TEACHING : *The case of selected secondary
schools in the Durban Metro in KwaZulu-Natal Province.***

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BY

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DECLARATION

In accordance with the regulations of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, I certify that the contents of this thesis are my own original work unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text. I further declare that this thesis has not been published at any other university.



B. L. Nyangiwe

I am satisfied that this thesis is now ready for examination.

Signature : _____

Prof E. de Kadt (Supervisor)

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ABSTRACT

South Africa has undergone many political changes since the apartheid era. A recent one has included the adoption of a new language-in-education policy recommending, among other things, the use of African indigenous languages as languages of learning and teaching (LOLT). The country has moved into a system in which learners and schools are entitled to choose their preferred LOLT. However, there have been few concrete changes to accommodate this choice. In particular, the above language-in-education policy has not yet been adequately implemented in schools.

This study investigates learners', educators' and parents' attitudes towards the use of English or/and isiZulu as the medium of learning and teaching in Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province. I ascertain if there are similarities and differences, if any, in the responses of the three groups of stakeholders from two secondary schools. I also demonstrate the implications of the attitudes of these stakeholders for the implementation of the current language-in-education policy. Lastly, I make recommendations that will assist language policy makers regarding the current language-in-education policy.

The study shows that there are mixed feelings regarding the LOLT issue. It was found that the respondents largely favour the use of English as the medium of instruction, yet some of the responses are self-contradictory, in that they simultaneously want isiZulu to be used as early as grade 1 as LOLT. Most respondents still envisage a future where English will continue to have political, educational, social and economic power over isiZulu.

There is thus an urgent need for the Department of Education to review the current language-in-education policy and address issues that might be hindering its implementation. The policy is likely to fail unless some intervention strategies

are taken to address these problems. It is hoped that this study will help to highlight issues that can be further investigated in this area.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

The main focus of this thesis is to investigate the attitudes of learners, educators and parents towards English or/and isiZulu as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) at two secondary schools in the greater Durban area. The study aims at ascertaining whether these three groups of stakeholders are in favour of the use of the previously disadvantaged indigenous languages as the medium of instruction, thus promoting multilingualism at schools. Also, by eliciting views on the medium of learning and teaching issue, this study seeks to make recommendations that will assist language policy makers regarding the language-in-education policy, in so far as it is likely that learners', educators' and parents' views will determine the success and failure of attempts to implement the current language-in-education policy. The investigation of attitudes is in accordance with Eastman's claim (cited in Verhoef 1998:187) that "it is important to know what people think about a language in order to predict whether it [language] will work as officials intend it to".

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study was prompted by reading the Department of Education's language-in-education policy dated 14 July 1997; the final draft of the language policy and plan for South Africa dated 29 February 2000; and the New Constitution for the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), documents which came out after the 1994 elections. The documents are aimed at promoting multilingualism and developing South Africa's eleven official languages. They state clearly that being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African. The new language-in-education policy thus aims at redressing the imbalances created by

the past language policy that promoted only two languages i.e. English and Afrikaans as the only official languages and neglected the indigenous languages.

The process by which language-in-education policies were determined, developed and implemented in the past was a fundamentally undemocratic one, since there was no consultation with the parties involved in the teaching and learning process. Reagan (1995:322) terms this the “top-down nature of the policy determination process”, with the result that policies, regardless of any objective merit, were either accepted or rejected largely on political and ideological grounds alone. The new language-in-education policy, in contrast, is democratic in the sense that the process involves all stakeholders in deciding the LOLT at schools. It is intended to equalize the status of all South African languages, and, at the same time, elevate the status of African languages that were neglected in the past.

This study was also prompted by my reading of Ngcobo (2001), a study which investigated attitudes of isiZulu speaking educators towards the role of isiZulu as a language of learning in education in Durban. His findings indicate that educators have mixed feelings about isiZulu and English as the medium of instruction. While there was some indication that educators would support the use of isiZulu as the medium of learning, at the same time, they reported that they favoured the use of English. I felt it would be of interest to extend this study to include a further sample of educators, as well as learners and parents.

1.2 LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY ISSUE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since 1953, South Africa has had a long and tragic history of resistance to the language-in-education policy. This was due to lack of consultation with the people the policies were meant to serve. The tragic events of the Soweto uprisings forced the Nationalist Party government to recognize black people’s attitudes towards the language policy that was designed for their education. I view this reaction by the Nationalist Party government as the first step towards realizing people’s attitudes,

because, for a language policy to succeed, it is crucial for the policy makers to take people's views into consideration.

The New Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No 200 of 1993), which came into effect in May 1994, embodies an explicit language policy. Eleven languages have official status nationally. These are: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, sePedi, seSwati, seTswana, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. The language-in-education policy is anticipated in Section 32 of the New Constitution, which grants each person the right "to instruction in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable". This policy also challenges schools to promote multilingualism through their language policies, with the assistance of their governing bodies.

1.3 POSSIBLE PROBLEMS WITH THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING ISSUE IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the current language-in-education policy, parents, in the form of governing bodies, have now been assigned the challenging task of determining the language policy for the schools. That is, they have to decide which languages will be used as the medium of learning at schools. The biggest problem in this regard is that although the current language policy is perceived to be a good one as it promotes multilingualism in South Africa, it is located in a context where English and, in some cases, Afrikaans have been the only official languages that have been used as the media of instruction. English, in particular, is widely perceived as "a language of access to a vast range of resources nationally and internationally, to higher education, to technology, to economic opportunities" (Herriman & Bumby 1996:28). The high status of English, together with poor conditions at most black schools, may well lead to parents sending their children to English only medium schools where they believe their children will become fluent in English because of the exposure to English first language speakers. A possible consequence of this is Herriman & Bumby's comment that "in South Africa most of the indigenous

languages are greatly endangered on account of previous policies and practices and the effects of English as the language of power" (1996:5).

The matters I have raised in this section make the issue of parental choice regarding the language of learning and teaching more difficult and, at the same time, might be an influential factor on the learners', educators' and parents' attitudes when choosing a medium of learning.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is mainly concerned with the attitudes of learners, educators and parents towards English versus isiZulu as the medium of learning and teaching at two secondary schools in the greater Durban area. In the course of addressing this broad aim, I consider the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes of learners, educators and parents towards the medium of instruction issue? Would they prefer English or/and isiZulu as the language of learning and teaching?
- 2) What are the similarities and differences, if any, in the responses of learners, educators and parents from two disparate secondary schools regarding the medium of learning issue?
- 3) What are the implications of the attitudes of these three groups of stakeholders for the implementation of the current language-in-education policy?
- 4) Based on my findings, what recommendations can be made to assist language policy makers regarding the current language-in-education policy?**

1.5 OUTLINE OF STUDY

This study consists of five chapters which are arranged as follows: Chapter one provides the background to this study. I start off by discussing the rationale for the choice of the topic. This is followed by a discussion of the language-in-education policy in South Africa, from 1953 to the present time. A brief discussion of possible problems with the current language policy in South Africa is given. Lastly, the research questions that were borne in mind when formulating the questionnaires (Appendix A, B and C) are also discussed.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature that provides a conceptual and a theoretical framework for this study. I discuss the past and present language-in-education policies in South Africa with the aim of highlighting how the current attitudes of learners, educators and parents might be influenced by the past language policy and the implementation of the current language-in-education policy. I also outline the relationship between language policy and power. The chapter also reports on various language attitude studies that have influenced my choice of the topic.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology I have adopted to collect data. The issues to be researched are outlined and the choice, design and administration of the research instruments viz. the questionnaire and semi-structured interview, are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents my analysis of the collected data and discusses the results of the research.

Chapter 5 concludes this study by considering the implications of the findings for the implementation of the new language-in-education policy.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I review the relevant literature on my topic. The chapter is divided into four sections.

2.1 LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1.1 HISTORY OF LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY

I believe that a brief review of the history of language-in-education policy for black people is relevant for this study, as it will help to put into perspective present attitudes towards multilingualism. This means that the attitudes of Black learners, educators and parents in this study would be better understood against the past experiences of Black people with regard to mother-tongue instruction. Verhoef (1998:185), too, argues that the South African community's past encounters with multilingualism will influence its present beliefs regarding multilingualism and will co-determine future language behaviour.

The following review of the history of language-in-education policy from the period before 1953 to 1993 is based on Chick (1992), Hartshorne (1995), and Heugh (1995). The Bantu education system of the apartheid years in South Africa, introduced in 1953, did not place much emphasis on the appreciation and development of the country's African languages. At the same time, the National Party government had sought to implement mother-tongue education for black learners, in the primary phase. In 1972, the Bantu Education Advisory Board recommended that mother-tongue instruction should be used up to Std 4 (now Grade 6) for six years, and be followed by either English or Afrikaans as the medium of instruction from Std 5 (Grade 7). The introduction of mother-tongue instruction met with opposition from the school boards, parents, teachers'

associations and the African community, because of its association with the apartheid regime and also because of the relatively low status of the African languages. It was seen as a strategy by the government to prevent African upward mobility and thereby “to ensure a perpetual reservoir of cheap labour” (Chick 1992). Chick (1992:275) further argues that “for many Blacks, mother-tongue education was an instrument that the apartheid government used to prevent their access to more advanced learning and to prepare them only for a separate and inferior education”.

At the same time, the National Party had seen English as a threat to Afrikaans, and had thus promoted Afrikaans as a means of reducing the influence of English in Black schools. In 1975 the government attempted to impose the use of both Afrikaans and English on an equal basis as media of instruction in the Black secondary schools, and to extend mother tongue education from Grade 4-8. This led to the Soweto uprisings of 16 June 1976 where Black students protested against the compulsory use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, and against mother tongue education in Black schools. According to Heugh (1995:342) the rejection of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction “had the incalculated effect of advancing the position of English, not only over Afrikaans, but also over African languages”. Thus the poor image of African languages and the perception of Afrikaans as the language of oppression paved the way for English to become identified by Black South Africans with empowerment, educational and economic advancement, political and social liberation and democracy. As Hartshorne (1995:312) points out: “By 1978 over 96 percent of African pupils in Std 5 (Grade 7) and above were being taught through the medium of English”, and English has remained the language of instruction in Black secondary schools throughout South Africa.

From 1977 onwards, the emphasis in the language struggle turned towards further limiting the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to the first four years of primary school. After 1982, the African schooling system was an English-

medium system from Grade 5 upwards. In the period 1990-1993, prior to the election of a democratic government in South Africa, the language debate continued and focused on, among other things, the status of South African languages at various levels. During this period the decision was adopted to have eleven official languages.

2.1.2 CURRENT LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY

The following review of the current language policy is based on the Department of Education's language-in-education policy dated 14 July 1997, the final draft of the language policy and plan for South Africa dated 29 February 2000, and the New Constitution for the Republic of South Africa. The other sources that I draw on in this section are Verhoef (1998), Kamwangamalu (1997), and Bengu (1997).

When the democratic government elected in April 1994 came into power, it attempted to redress the imbalances of the past, as reflected in the past language policy, by giving equal status to all eleven languages. These are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, sePedi, seSotho, seSwati, Setswana, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. According to the New Constitution (section 3), South Africa has chosen eleven languages to recognize the country's linguistic diversity as well as the fact that the majority of South Africans (probably 98%) use one of these languages as their home or first language. It is clear that the emphasis of the policy is very much on developing multilingualism, as compared to the focus on English and Afrikaans as the only official languages in the past language policy of South Africa.

As regards the question of medium of instruction in schools, the New Constitution (Section 32) stipulates that:

“every person shall be entitled to instruction in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable”

One of the clauses appearing in the Norms and Standards regarding Language Policy published in terms of Section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 states that

“In determining the language policy of the school, the governing body must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning and teaching,

This provision involves parents in choosing the medium of instruction for their children at schools, unlike previously where the medium of instruction was stipulated by the government of the day with no involvement of parents at all. Therefore, school governing bodies are recognized as “the key partner” in pursuit of the goal of multilingualism, and they are required under the Act ‘to announce the school’s language policy, and to state how it will promote multilingualism through a variety of measures” (Bengu 1997:2). It is clear that in practice, this policy opens the doors to multilingual approaches, but choice and direction lie with parents and schools.

Implementation of the policy poses questions, however. How will it be feasible to use eleven official languages? It might appear simpler just to opt for English, but clearly it would be undemocratic to declare English as the only official language, because it is a minority language, spoken as a first or home language by only 9% of South Africa’s population. On the other hand, would it be feasible to use eleven official languages at schools, bearing in mind the costs of this option e.g. the necessary teacher training, resources needed etc?

2.1.3 OPPOSING VIEWS CONCERNING THE CURRENT LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY

Luckett (1995:74) points out that although the language-in-education policy would seem to set a sound framework for democracy, “there is a danger that the implementation of such a policy may still fall into an assimilationist trap in which people will choose to learn English to the detriment of the African languages, and

so the power of English and the low status of the African languages will simply be reinforced”.

On the other hand, Kamwangamalu (1997:242), argues that “implicit in South Africa’s language policy is the option that people could choose to be educated in their mother tongue, wherever this is reasonably practicable. In accordance with this, in the KwaZulu-Natal province, mother-tongue education should not pose any problem at all since the majority of the population are isiZulu mother-tongue speakers”. These two opposing views highlight the issues my research is intended to explore: are stakeholders more interested in English or in isiZulu, or perhaps in both, as the LOLT?

2.2 LANGUAGE POLICY AND POWER

2.2.1 THE POWER OF LANGUAGE POLICIES

I feel it is important for me to show how language policy and power are interrelated, as I believe this will have a great impact on the responses given by the learners, educators and parents regarding the issue of the medium of instruction. I will start off by defining ‘language policy’ and ‘power’. According to Dirven (1991:165), the term ‘language policy’ is usually understood to mean the official policy of a government in planning the use of one or more languages in a given country. He also points out that the term can also be given a wider psychological interpretation to refer to the attitudes different population groups have towards the official language legislation and towards the other languages of their nation. This is a relevant definition for this study since I look at the current language-in-education policy and how the people it is intended for view it. Dirven’s definition is also in line with Lockett’s view that “a new language policy for our schools will have to take the language attitudes of South Africans into account” (Lockett 1995:74). Such a move in determining the attitudes of the people, as this study does, is relevant in the democratic South Africa, unlike in the past when language policies were simply imposed on people. The main focus of my study is

thus to investigate the attitudes of learners, educators and parents towards the issue of English or/and isiZulu as the medium of instruction at two secondary schools in Durban in KwaZulu-Natal.

To show the relationship of language and power, Fairclough (1989:17) argues that "language is centrally involved in power, and struggles for power". "Power", according to Tollefson (1991:9) refers to the ability to achieve one's goals and to control events through intentional action. He explains that people exercise power because of their social relationships within institutional structures that provide meaning to their actions and also limit them. Tollefson (1991:16) concurs with this assertion and argues that language policy is one mechanism for locating language within social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources. In South Africa previous language policies were deliberately engineered to perpetuate relations of power by manipulating meaning so as to disguise those relations. Thus past language policies devalued the status of the indigenous languages and attached more value to the status of English and Afrikaans. This factor might influence the implementation of the current language –in-education policy with its goal of multilingualism.

Tollefson views language policy as part of the state's disciplinary power by which it structures "into the institutions of society the differentiation of individuals into '*insiders*' and '*outsiders*'" (1991:207). In speaking about the same situation, different scholars use different concepts. Myers-Scotton (1990c:149) refers to this strategy as "elite closure" whereas Pennycook (1994:14) speaks of a language (in this case English) functioning "as a gatekeeper to positions of prestige in society". This view also seems to exist in this country as recent studies (Webb 1992; Bosch & de Klerk 1994) suggest. In particular, the studies show that English is still popularly associated, firstly, with wealth, prestige and status and, secondly, with favourable personal traits. And since the present majority of African educators and parents are a product of the type of education that was based on the ideology that promoted English and Afrikaans at the expense of African languages, it would not

be surprising for some respondents in this study to favour English more than their own language as the medium of learning.

In the context of this study, the present language-in-education policy is meant to redress past language experiences (see 2.1.2), whereby the previous language policy compelled Africans to learn and generally operate in languages that were not theirs. The current language-in-education policy thus aims at redressing that situation by introducing the principle of multilingualism. However it remains to be seen whether the people the policy aims to help will embrace it.

2.2.2 LANGUAGE AND POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA

Fairclough (1989:33-34) makes the distinction between coercive power and consensual power by first defining coercive power as a situation where someone is made to do something through force or threat. He considers consensual power as more efficient because it is used in a more invisible manner for the day-to-day maintenance of social order. What makes consensual power convenient is that it is, according to Corson (1991:235), a "non-coercive force" which is capable of penetrating consciousness. With reference to language, the 'dominated' accept the linguistic norms created by dominant groups, unaware that they are being voluntarily coerced. In the case of South Africa, the hegemony of English is the site of consensual power in the sense that learners, educators and parents have a nominal choice that is largely influenced by this consensual power. Thus, Black educators and parents are more than likely to be victims of this type of power, for they still believe that English is the language of power even though present language policies state and demand the contrary. This belief might also prevail in learners' attitudes towards English or/and isiZulu as the medium of learning.

According to Herriman & Burnaby (1996:5), most of the indigenous languages in South Africa are greatly endangered on account of previous policies and practices and the effects of English as the language of power. As Extra and Maartens

(1998) point out, “South Africa’s past language policy, which focused on the institutionalization of English and Afrikaans as the only official languages, ensured that a particular group of people i.e first language speakers of these languages, especially Whites, enjoyed political, educational and economic power, while speakers of other languages were disadvantaged”. This created a situation where it was seen as natural for these languages, English in particular, to be acquired in order to allow for one’s upward mobility. In this way, the hegemony of English was established. “Hegemony”, according to Tollefson (1991:12) may be achieved through the “spontaneous consent” of the people to the direction of social life imposed by dominant groups. Blacks, in particular, perceived English as a superior language that would open future doors for them. For this reason English is still perceived as “a language of access to a vast range of resources nationally and internationally, to higher education, to technology, to economic opportunities, and as a lingua franca both within the country and beyond its borders” (Herriman & Burnaby 1996:28). This perception of English might have a considerable influence on the learners, educators and parents in choosing the LOLT. Another factor that might have influence on their choices is the current role of English as the major language medium at higher primary and secondary level. It is clear that the current language-in-education policy exists in a context dominated by English as a hegemonic language.

2.3 LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

2.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF ATTITUDES IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Since this study is mainly concerned with language attitudes, I now move to a discussion of attitudes and their importance for policy implementation. From the many definitions of the concept ‘attitudes’ (Bem:1968), McGuire:1985), I have adopted those provided by Ajzen (1988) and Baker (1992) as more relevant to my study. Ajzen (1988:4) defines an attitude as a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event. For Baker, this disposition comprises three components: an affective, a cognitive and a conative component.

The affective component includes feelings towards an object, such as love or hate of a language, a passion or anxiety about it (1992:12). This suggests that attitudes are often subconscious and less based on rational explanation. For example, learners, educators and parents might show positive or negative feelings towards the use of English or/and isiZulu without actually giving justifiable and valid explanation to their choices. Although there is a close link between attitude and behaviour, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980:17) point out that “attitudes serve as behavioural predispositions”. Ajzen and Fishbein (ibid) further highlight that “although the attitude may initially predispose them [people] to behave in the same ways (positively or negatively), the behaviours they ultimately come to exhibit will depend on the nature of the reinforcements they receive”. The cognitive element incorporates knowledge, thoughts, perceptions and beliefs about an object, and the behavioural or conative component involves the predisposition and intentions to act or readiness for action (Baker 1992). My study will focus mainly on the affective component, but will also touch on the cognitive.

Baker (1992:9) illustrates the importance of attitudes in a number of ways. Firstly, he states that attitudes towards a language appear to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay or death. A survey of attitudes also provides an indicator of current community thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires. Attitude surveys thus provide social indicators of changing beliefs and the chances of success in policy implementation. Bosch and de Klerk (1996) similarly emphasize the fundamental nature of knowledge of attitudes for the formulation of language policy as well as successful implementation. That is why the ultimate goal of this study is to determine how attitudes of learners, educators and parents may influence the current implementation of the language-in-education policy.

2.3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDE STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1996, Bosch and de Klerk (1996:234) indicated that very few empirical studies had been carried out regarding language attitudes in South Africa, "mainly because of the methodological problems of high quality research in such an esoteric area". They pointed to "a very urgent need for research into the general attitudes towards English and the other main languages in particular regions and into the validity of stereotypes associated with the speakers of different languages" (1996:232). In response to this plea, language attitude studies are now increasingly being undertaken. To better locate my study, I will outline studies that have been conducted between 1993 and 2002 here in South Africa, with special reference to the attitudes of learners, educators and parents towards English and indigenous languages, and specifically towards the medium of instruction issue. (Most studies address both issues, which are of course closely related.)

The research conducted amongst second language speakers of English in this country indicates that the perception of English as the language of power, upward social mobility and improved quality of life is generally common amongst black South Africans. For example, this is evident in the study of attitudes that was conducted in the Eastern Cape by Bosch & de Klerk (1994) who sought to assess, through a questionnaire, conscious opinions of the speakers of the three main languages in the region, namely isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans. Among the items intended to elicit perceptions of instrumental value were those relating to choice of official language, medium of instruction and 'language of success'. The responses of Xhosa speakers to those items provide a clear illustration of the generally positive perceptions that these second language speakers have for English. 72,2 % preferred English to isiXhosa or Afrikaans as the official language; 65,3 % favoured English as the medium of instruction; and 85,9 % identified English as the language of success. According to Mawasha (1995), it is this perception of English being the ultimate goal in attaining self-sufficiency and

worthiness that probably alienated black people from their indigenous languages and culture. A recent study of the same geographical area suggests some interesting shifts in language attitudes, though not in the choice of medium of instruction (de Klerk 2002a). This study revealed that 81% of the parents who answered the questionnaire and 65% of those who were interviewed showed a great support towards the maintenance of isiXhosa as the mother tongue. At the same time, most of the parents interviewed had capitulated to the power of English and accepted that it was going to dominate in the future lives of their children and was essential in helping them to succeed socially, educationally and economically.

This more ambiguous attitude is confirmed by an empirical study undertaken to ascertain prevalent perceptions among full-and part-time BEd Hons student educators studying at the Bloemfontein and Queenstown campuses of the Free State University with regard to the use of English and indigenous African languages as LOLT conducted by de Wet (2001). Respondents from all the language communities who took part in the research project indicated that English was the most important language in the area of politics, education, science and technology, as well as trade and industry. On the other hand, a significant percentage (72,6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that home language education would enhance teaching and learning. These responses reveal that whilst the respondents attach more importance to English because of its instrumental value, they would like to see the indigenous African languages being promoted as well.

Quite possibly, language attitudes differ from region to region. A questionnaire survey on language use conducted by Kamwangamalu (2002b) with learners in two secondary schools in Durban reveals that while English is widely used in the family, isiZulu is not used at all in higher domains such as education. When asked which languages they would prefer to be used as the medium of instruction for children of their own, the majority of the learners overwhelmingly chose English. 73% of the learners said they would send their children to an English-medium

school, while 23% opted for a Zulu-English medium school. Only 4% claimed they would send their children to a Zulu-medium school. The relatively small number of learners who chose both isiZulu and English as a medium of instruction, appear to have a divided loyalty between the two languages. This might mean that they would opt for bilingual education, if they had a choice.

Many of the studies show black learners and parents favouring English as LOLT. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report, Language (1992) and Edusource Data News (1993) cited by Ridge (1996) report that when offered a choice, significant numbers of black parents have opted for English as the language of instruction for their children, even from the first year of primary school. Young (1995:63) point out that African students and their parents do not seem to favour a move away from English as the language of learning and teaching. While maintaining a strong allegiance to their home language, students seem to see them as just the languages of the home, whereas English is perceived as the language of aspiration. To me the students' and parents' choices in the above studies are strongly influenced by the instrumental value of English i.e. a perception that proficiency in English will increase the likelihood of finding employment.

This emerging consensus as to the attitudes of parents is, however, disputed by Heugh in a recent article. Heugh (2000) notes that some argue that parents believe that the sooner their children are exposed to English as the language of learning, the sooner they will gain proficiency in it. She nevertheless challenges these findings and states that there is no statistical evidence to support this perception and the rationale for parents' choices. She claims that it is true that there are parents who would choose English over their home language. The fact is that there are, also, many more parents who do not make such choices. Yet the preferences of a minority are presented as if they were valid for the majority. She goes on and asserts "the reluctance towards implementing the new language-in-

education policy, or tardiness with regard to it is often ascribed to the belief that most parents want English only” (Heugh 2000:11).

Black educators do appear to be much more aware of the importance of educating children in their first language. In a survey carried out as part of NEPI, over 70% of the African teachers felt their students would do better if they could learn through their home language (Bot 1993). However, at the same time, these same teachers overwhelmingly supported English as the language of learning and wanted to see it introduced earlier. Again there appear to be mixed feelings towards the medium of instruction issue, which might prompt them to choose dual medium of instruction. Murray (1998:438) justifies the choices made by these educators by highlighting that at the time of the survey, teachers were constrained by the current language policy, and although they understood their students’ difficulties, they were also aware of the economic power of English.

More recent studies also confirm these findings. Ngcobo’s (2001) study on isiZulu speaking educators’ attitudes towards the role of isiZulu as a language of learning in education in Durban reveals a similarly ambiguous set of beliefs. While there was some indication that educators would support the use of isiZulu as the medium of learning, they equally favoured the use of English. As a result 76% of the respondents send their children to English medium schools. The interviews that were conducted by de Klerk (2002b) with the heads of the schools in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province also reveal that all the educators who responded emphasise the importance of mother tongue education. At the same time, most of them also acknowledge the obvious advantages of competence in English in today’s world. Overall, this body of research suggests that African educators are more aware than parents of the difficulties children experience while learning in a second language. They are the ones who could be expected to show

strong support to their home language being introduced early. Yet most of them send their own children to English-medium schools.¹

Many of the studies reveal ambiguous attitudes towards the issue of the medium of instruction. Most teachers, and many parents, are aware of the value of learners' home languages. At the same time, all are aware of the importance of English in today's world. This does suggest that bilingual education might best cater for the children/learners and also be acceptable to parents. A weakness of many studies has been that they have presented respondents with questions phrased as either/or, and hence may have overlooked an interest in bilingual education.

As regards methodologies, most of the studies undertaken in South Africa were conducted by means of questionnaires. Only Ngcobo (2001), in his study made use of both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

2.4 **CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the review of studies on language attitudes discussed in this section, it is apparent that most black South Africans still attach more value to English as the medium of learning and teaching. Ngcobo's (2001) study is one of only two pieces of research, to my knowledge, to explore attitudes towards LOLT in Kwa-Zulu Natal, and his study has considered Black educators only. Kamwangamalu (2002) investigated the views of learners only. Therefore, in this study, I am drawing on research done elsewhere in South Africa, to expand these local approaches, on the one hand by including Black learners, educators and parents, on the other, by comparing attitudes in a former Model C school with attitudes in a township school. I also decided to use the same methods of data collection as Ngcobo (2001): questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

¹ This contradiction between attitudes and practices may, of course, not be only an issue of language. At present, most English-medium schools are far better equipped and have lower pupil-teacher ratios than those catering for speakers of indigenous languages, and hence are able to offer a better quality of education.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methods of data collection I have used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.0 INTRODUCTION

My aim in this chapter is to discuss and explain the different procedures that I have used in collecting data for this study. The sources of my data include questionnaires and informal interviews.

The chapter is divided as follows: Section 3.1 outlines the method of research that informed this study. Section 3.2 focuses on the questionnaire survey that I administered among learners, educators and parents at the two schools. In Section 3.3 I discuss the pilot study I did before I administered the questionnaires, and its advantages. Section 3.4 focuses on the interviews that I conducted with the learners, educators and parents at the two schools. Section 3.5 provides a summary of the issues I have discussed in this chapter.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has used the survey research method. In developing my methodology, I have drawn on work by Cohen and Manion (1994), Johnson (1992), Nunan (1992), and Bell (1993). Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that the survey is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research. Johnson (1992) and Nunan (1992), in addition, state that survey methods are suited to studying a wide variety of linguistic issues including the investigation of attitudes of teachers toward language varieties, which was part of this study. According to Bell

(1993:10), the “aim of a survey is to obtain information which can be analysed, patterns extracted and comparisons made”. In this study I have adopted a combination of two methods of data collection i.e. questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in order to achieve triangulation (see Nunan 1992:142). As Cohen and Manion (1994:233) put it, “triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour”. The value of triangulation is that it enhances the validity and reliability of one’s information. To ensure reliability in my results, I therefore adopted the questionnaire as a means of gathering data of a factual nature and semi-structured interviews as a means of verifying the findings. I believed that these were the most appropriate instruments for this study taking into consideration time, expense and, most importantly, their potential reliability.

In the next section, I shall explain in detail the different methodologies I have used, their rationale, advantages and disadvantages.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

Wiersma (1969:274) defines the questionnaire as a list of questions or statements to which the subject is asked to respond by a written response. According to Wilson and McLean (1994; cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000:245), “the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straight forward to analyse”. I decided to use the questionnaire as an instrument for the survey because it can easily be administered to a large group of subjects, even without my presence, and I would be able to get a wide range of information. The data could be counted and scores compared to determine whether there are consistent patterns. The scores obtained would allow me to make generalisations about trends that emerged. Furthermore, the questionnaire is an economical means of data collection in terms of time and money. Also, the

anonymity that the questionnaire allowed for, made it possible for respondents to respond openly to questions which targeted sensitive information.

Although questionnaires offer a number of advantages, there are also limitations particularly in the quality of data that can be obtained. One of the disadvantages is that they do not allow the interviewer to correct misunderstandings or answer questions that the respondent may have. A further potential weakness of questionnaires, according to Behr (1983), is that even though they provide important information to the researcher, responses are still subjective, and their validity and reliability can be difficult to determine. Another weakness with them is that they do not provide a way of checking whether the respondents' manner of understanding questions is in line with the way intended by the researcher. Misunderstandings could emerge due to the fact that respondents might not be familiar with the concepts used or the issues in question.

In anticipation of the impact of the mentioned shortcomings of the data collected by means of this instrument, I conducted a pilot study that enabled me to revise the questions so as to minimize any misunderstanding, confusion or ambiguities. In addition to the questionnaire pretest, I conducted interviews so that I could verify the findings.

3.2.1 THE PILOT STUDY

Before the pilot stage, the draft questionnaires were submitted to my supervisor for further input, as suggested by Kidder & Judd (1986:233). Such checks are of importance, because, "question wording is not as easy as it seems, and careful piloting is necessary to ensure that all questions mean the same to all respondents" (Bell 1993:11). Thus one of the aims was to eliminate any ambiguities or difficulties in the wording, to check whether the instructions were clear, and whether the questions were too long or too short, too easy or difficult. Another goal of doing a pilot study was to check how much time would be spent to

complete the questionnaires (see also Bell 1993:84). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001:260) cite numerous other researchers, as stating that a pilot study will “principally increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire”.

My questionnaires were tried out on a group similar to the one that would form the population of my study, as highlighted by Nisbet and Entwistle (1974:51). Therefore I distributed my questionnaires to five educators and ten learners from grade 8 and 12 in the school where I teach, since it is also a secondary school with Grade 8-12 learners. As part of the pilot study, I then asked the same learners who completed the questionnaire to ask their parents to complete them as well. After analyzing the responses, I made some adjustments to learners’ and parents’ questionnaires, as there were questions that were misunderstood. I also discovered that there were sections that were left unanswered. When I did a follow-up, I was led to believe that the respondents did not understand these questions. Through revision, I was able to simplify those questions by requesting respondents to tick only what was relevant to them.

3.2.2 DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

I decided to use several kinds of question and response modes in the questionnaire. These included a number of closed questions that required explicit answers and enabled me to obtain quantitative information. The closed questions prescribed the range of responses from which the respondents had to choose. They were thus easy to analyse. Scaled responses were also used where the respondents were required to record their responses to a given statement by selecting from a number of alternatives.

The advantages of closed questions as stated by Wilson and McLean (1994:21; cited in Cohen and Manion 1994) are that they “are quick to complete and straight forward to code, and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are”. On the other hand, they do not enable respondents to add

remarks, qualifications and explanations to the categories. However, Oppenheim (1992:115; cited in Cohen and Manion 1994) point out that “there is a risk that the categories might not be exhaustive and that there might be bias in them”. To overcome this limitation, I also used open-ended questions where, in some cases, respondents were asked to explain the reason/s for the choices they had made. (See Questionnaires in Appendices A, B and C). Wiersma defines an open-ended question as “one for which the subject constructs his response rather than selecting from a group of alternative responses” (1969:274). This type of question thus required some description and detail. A question like this one allows one the opportunity to collect qualitative information and to discover new variables in responses.

The first series of questions in educators’ and parents’ questionnaires (Ques 1-4) was intended to establish some personal information about the educators and parents who answered the questionnaire. This is in line with the view expressed by Peil (1982) that it is necessary to have biographical information at the beginning of the questionnaire as most people enjoy introducing themselves. Moreover, such information would enable me to analyse responses across various variables since language attitudes are dependent on many interrelated factors such as age and sex.

In this study, both educators and parents were asked to first give a biographical profile pertaining to first language, sex, age and level of education. The reason for eliciting this type of information was to determine which of these variables had a major and/or minor effect on language attitudes. The remainder of the questionnaires, including those of learners, was intended to elicit respondents’ attitudes towards the LOLT issue, as per the aim of this study. (See Ques 6a+b, 7a+b in educators’ questionnaire; Ques 5, 6a+b, 7a+b, 8a+b in parents’ questionnaire; Ques 5a+b, 6a+b in learners’ questionnaire).

Finally, the respondents (learners, educators and parents) were asked to indicate briefly what they thought about the likely future role of the two languages, English and isiZulu. They were therefore asked to indicate which of these languages they anticipated using primarily across a range of situations. The situations first covered personal domains – their families, conversations with friends and in the area where they plan to live. These were followed by public domains such as interacting with public servants and in their future professions.

At the end of the questionnaire, educators and parents who were willing to be interviewed on their responses were requested to indicate this by means of a cross. It is acknowledged that this selection process may well have introduced some bias into the responses.

3.2.3 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were distributed to a total of 60 learners from grades 8 and 12, i.e. 30 learners per grade, to 20 educators and to 20 parents from both schools. The reason for my choice of learners is that I wanted to get responses from different age groups, as I believed that their responses would also be determined by their future goals as well, especially grade 12 learners.

Questionnaires were administered by myself, as a researcher, to both learners and educators at Mziwamandla High school in Umlazi. One of the advantages of doing self-distribution is that I could explain the purpose of the research to the respondents and thus alleviate any fears which are associated with completing a questionnaire. I was also likely to get better co-operation as I could establish personal contact. Also my presence as administrator made it possible to ensure that all respondents understood the questions, as some clarification was required. Learners who had completed the questionnaires were given questionnaires for their parents to complete. An arrangement was made with the H.O.D. of

Languages to collect these questionnaires the following day. The rate of return was hundred percent.

At Ridge Park College in Overport, because Grade 12 learners were writing trial exams, I administered questionnaires only to grade 8 learners and to educators. I had to leave the questionnaires for grade 12 learners and parents with the Deputy Principal for her to monitor the process of completion on my behalf. The return rate from both learners and parents at this school was also hundred percent.

3.3 INTERVIEWS

As questionnaires have limitations particularly in the quality of data that can be obtained, I conducted informal interviews so that I could verify the findings of my data. According to Kerlinger, (cited in Cohen and Manion 1994:273) this type of data collection "might be used to follow up unexpected results, for example, or to validate other methods, or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do". Thus the informal interviews were employed as a means of triangulating the results obtained through questionnaires. Seliger and Shohamy (1990:167) explain that semi-open interviews consist of specific core questions that are prepared in advance from which the interviewer elicits deeper insights by asking further probing questions that allow for the elaboration of information. I therefore prepared a list of questions that I would ask the respondents, to elicit further information regarding the medium of instruction issue.

One of the advantages of the less formal interview is that the interviewer is free to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording, explain them or add to them. Another advantage is that it involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. Thus it allows for greater depth than is the case with questionnaires. A disadvantage, on the other hand, is that it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer. Kidder and Judd (1986:225-6)

point out that “the interviewer’s expectations or personal characteristics such as race or sex can influence responses”.

3.3.1 ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERVIEWS

Before the interviews were conducted, a pilot run was done to 4 learners and 2 educators at my own school, as Nisbet and Entwistle (1974:39) maintain that “the pilot run is done with a sample which is similar to the group from which the interview sample will be selected, but obviously it must not include any who will be interviewed later”. Answers were recorded as fully as possible. At the end of the pilot run, the questions and responses were examined to remedy omissions, to revise the order of questions, and principally to identify ambiguities or points where there had been confusion.

I then interviewed 20 learners (10 from each school) and 8 educators (4 from each school). Out of 20 questionnaires that were distributed by learners to parents, 7 indicated willingness to be interviewed. I then interviewed 4 parents from Ridge Park College and 3 from Mziwamandla High School. Before I interviewed parents, I had to find out about the date of the parents’ meetings in both schools. I was fortunate because the year plan of both schools accommodated the last parents’ meeting of the year at the end of September. I therefore had an opportunity to conduct informal interviews with the parents who had indicated their willingness to be interviewed on the questionnaire. I had to visit the school two days prior to the meeting day to discuss, with the educators who had helped me with the questionnaire process, the procedure I would follow to make the interviews successful.

Before interviewing the respondents, I outlined the purpose of the interview and emphasized that I would not be tape recording their conversations. I felt it necessary to state my intentions because, according to my experience, most people have a fear of interviews and they might thus not be free to respond.

Nisbet and Entwistle (1974:42) note that at the start of the interview, “the main task is to establish rapport, to make contact and allow the subjects to feel at ease”. Thus the respondents co-operated with me because, I assume, I had gained their trust as an outsider in the schools and had succeeded in making them feel at ease. I started by asking the easier and less threatening, non-controversial questions in order to put the respondents at ease. The initial focus was on the ‘what’ and ‘which’ questions, which were then followed by the more searching and difficult ones, the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions.

The main advantage of conducting the interviews was that I, as a researcher, had the ability to notice and correct the respondents’ misunderstandings, probe inadequate or vague responses, and to answer questions that the respondents asked for clarity. Another advantage was the flexibility the interview provided in that I could ask for an elaboration or a redefinition of the response if it appeared incomplete or ambiguous.

I collected this type of data by recording the information with pen and paper, rather than with a tape recorder, since it was an informal interview.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have outlined the main aspects of the methodologies I have used in this investigation and I have provided a rationale for choosing them. I have also explained the merits as well as the limitations of the methods used. The findings of the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews are discussed in next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapter 3, the study was carried out in the Durban Metro in KwaZulu-Natal province at Ridge Park College and Mziwamandla High School. The written questionnaires were distributed to a total number of 60 isiZulu speaking learners from grades 8 and 12, to 20 educators and to 20 parents drawn from both schools. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 learners, 8 educators and 7 parents from both schools.

In this chapter I present my research findings with respect to learners, educators and parents in turn. In each case I seek to contrast the responses from the two schools surveyed. In order to ascertain any similarities and differences in especially learners' responses from the two schools, in some cases the results are tabulated as **School A** and **School B**. Where this is the case, **School A** represents Ridge Park College and **School B** represents Mziwamandla High School. Copies of the questionnaires are attached as Appendix A, B and C.

4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE TWO SCHOOLS WHERE DATA WAS COLLECTED

Ridge Park College is a girls' school situated in Overport in Durban. It is an ex-Model C school that caters for students from different racial groups. In 2001 the school had a population of 1072 students: 80% Black, 5% White, 10% Indians and 5% Coloured students. It is evident that, according to those statistics, the majority of learners in this school are black and isiZulu first language speakers. The school caters for learners from grade 8 to 12, and isiZulu is taught as a second language.

Mziwamandla High School, on the other hand, had a population of 983 students in 2001. The school caters only for Black students, boys and girls, whose first language is mainly isiZulu. Like Ridge Park College, the school caters for learners from grade 8 to 12, but isiZulu is taught as a first language.

4.2 LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The findings below are based on the answers given to the questionnaire that was administered to 60 respondents. The findings are discussed sequentially in the order in which the questions appear in the questionnaire.

The first and second questions confirmed that mainly isiZulu speakers had been selected for the study, and that they had been educated through the medium of English. In addition to 54 isiZulu first language speakers, there were 4 isiXhosa first language speakers and 2 seSotho first language speakers, but those learners too were fluent in isiZulu .

Question three explored the respondents' claimed ability in English and isiZulu. The findings are provided below in Table 1 with explanations and summaries thereafter.

TABLE 1 : LEARNERS' ABILITY IN LANGUAGES²

	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL B
LANGUAGES	ENGLISH	ISIZULU	ENGLISH	ISIZULU
READING				
GOOD	24 (80%)	20 (67%)	19 (63%)	22 (73%)
AVERAGE	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	11 (37%)	8 (27%)
POOR				
WRITING				
GOOD	30 (100%)	23 (77%)	13 (43%)	28 (93%)
AVERAGE		7 (23%)	15 (50%)	2 (7%)
POOR			2 (7%)	
SPEAKING				
GOOD	30 (100%)	24 (80%)	8 (27%)	30 (100%)
AVERAGE		5 (16%)	17 (57%)	
POOR		1 (4%)	1 (4%)	
LISTENING				
GOOD	28 (93%)	22 (73%)	20 (67%)	30 (100%)
AVERAGE	2 (7%)	6 (20%)	8 (27%)	
POOR		2 (7%)	2 (6%)	
		n = 30		n = 30

I must point out that the validity of the above findings, including those of Table 2, is questionable since these findings simply represent learners' claims regarding their proficiency.

Table 1 indicates that the majority of respondents from both schools claim to be good in reading and listening skills in English, although when comparing the two schools in these two language skills, respondents from Ridge Park College claim

² Given the subsequent focus of the study on English and isiZulu, I do not report on the results for learner proficiency in Afrikaans.

to have a greater ability than those from Mziwamandla. In the other two skills, all the respondents from Ridge Park College indicated that they are good in writing and speaking English, whereas learners from Mziwamandla High School indicated a lower ability in these skills. Fairly substantial differences in the spread between good and average are particularly significant at Mziwamandla. Only 43% claim to be good at writing compared to 100% at Ridge Park College, and only 27% claim to be good at speaking compared to 100% at Ridge Park College. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents from both schools indicated that they are good in all the four skills in isiZulu. When comparing both schools in their claimed ability in English and isiZulu, it is clear that the respondents from Ridge Park College claim higher proficiency in English than isiZulu, whereas those from Mziwamandla claim to be better in isiZulu than English. The claimed higher proficiency in English by respondents from Ridge Park College is surprising, given the fact that they are isiZulu first language speakers. Being in a more English oriented environment might have an impact on claimed proficiency in both English and isiZulu. Respondents from Mziwamandla claim to battle particularly in speaking and writing English as the medium of learning and teaching, but not in their first language. The above findings make one conclude that learners, in especially, Mziwamandla, but to a lesser degree in Ridge Park, are disadvantaged by using English as the medium of instruction. Therefore, the above findings make one expect that Mziwamandla learners would choose isiZulu as the medium of instruction and that Ridge Park learners would opt for English as the medium of learning.

Question four established the respondents' claimed level of understanding when lessons are taught in English.

TABLE 2 : LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH

	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B
UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING THAT IS SAID	17 (57%)	8 (27%)
UNDERSTAND MOST OF WHAT IS SAID	13 (43%)	18 (60%)
UNDERSTAND SOME OF WHAT IS SAID		4 (13%)
	n = 30	n = 30

The findings as revealed in the above table confirm the findings in Table 1. They indicate that the majority of learners at Ridge Park College claim to understand everything that is said when lessons are taught in English, whilst the rest of them claim to understand most information. At Mziwamandla High School, the majority of learners indicate that they do not understand everything, but most information, when lessons are conducted in English.

The main issue that this study set out to investigate was that of attitudes towards English or isiZulu, or perhaps both as the medium of instruction. Thus the remainder of the questions (5-8) was intended to elicit the perceptions of the respondents towards this issue. Question five asked the respondents to indicate the grade at which, if they had a free choice, they would introduce English or isiZulu as the language of learning in all subjects. They were asked to provide reasons for the choices made. The responses are shown below in Table 3.

**TABLE 3 : INTRODUCTION OF *ENGLISH* OR *ISIZULU* AS THE LOLT
ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>
GRADE	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>
1	28 (93%)	10 (33%)	11 (37%)	26 (87%)
2			2 (7%)	
3		4 (13%)	5 (16%)	1 (3%)
5		2 (7%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)
8		2 (7%)	4 (13%)	
10	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	
TERTIARY				
NOT AT ALL		9 (30%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)
		n = 30		n = 30

Table 3 confirms the expectations on the basis of perceived language proficiency mentioned earlier on with a vast majority (93%) of the respondents from Ridge Park College opting for English to be introduced as LOLT as early as grade 1 and 87% from Mziwamandla opting for isiZulu as LOLT to be introduced in grade 1. On the other hand, 33% of Ridge Park respondents would also prefer isiZulu to be introduced as LOLT in the same grade as well, whilst 37% of the respondents from Mziwamandla also prefer English to be introduced in grade 1 as LOLT. Some respondents chose English to be introduced in grade 2 – 10. It is apparent from the foregoing presentation of the findings that the respondents from both schools have mixed feelings regarding the role which English/isiZulu should play as the medium of instruction. Whilst a vast majority in Ridge Park seems to have a high preference for the early introduction of English as the LOLT, some especially in Mziwamandla feel that it should be introduced in later grades. Some respondents also opt for the early introduction of isiZulu as the LOLT and others opt for the introduction of isiZulu in later grades as well (grades 3 – 10). These findings could also be taken as an indication that they would accept dual-medium instruction, which shows that there is a stronger leaning towards bilingual education. For both

Ridge Park and Mziwamandla learners, the findings show a split between bilingual and monolingual education, although the majority is for bilingual education.

Reasons given by both schools in favour of the introduction of English as the medium of instruction at grade 1 were:

- “To understand other subjects better”
- “English is an international language and lingua franca”
- “For better communication with other races”
- “To get used to speaking it since job interviews are done in English”

The following is a sample of the comments made by the respondents from Mziwamandla High School and some from Ridge Park College in favour of the introduction of isiZulu as the medium of instruction at grade 1:

- “It is easy to understand information written in your own language”
- “English is difficult to understand since it is not our mother tongue”
- “So that you can express your feelings about something easily”
- “To uplift its status as other people undermine a person who speaks Zulu”
- “Zulu is regarded as an official language as well. Why not use it as a language of learning instead of English?”

30% of the respondents from Ridge Park College and only 7% of the respondents from Mziwamandla High School believe that isiZulu should not be introduced at all as the language of learning across the curriculum. This choice serves to emphasise the preference of the early introduction of English as the medium of instruction.

Some of the reasons given by both schools for the option of not introducing isiZulu at all as the medium of instruction were:

- “It is impossible to learn all subjects in Zulu. To come up with relevant English terms might be a problem”
- “Its not an international language like English”
- “Job interviews are conducted in English not Zulu”

It is evident that the attitudes of the respondents towards the language of teaching and learning are largely determined by their future goals. The learners prefer English as the language of learning not just for themselves, but for the future. For them, English is the future, a language that represents progress, opportunities and modernity.

Question six offered respondents a more differentiated breakdown of the ways in which English and isiZulu could be taught in schools. The responses are indicated in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4 : LEARNERS’ PREFERENCES

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	SCHOOL A	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	SCHOOL B
<i>PREFERENCE</i>	<i>ENGLISH</i>	ISIZULU	<i>ENGLISH</i>	ISIZULU
Medium of instruction across the curriculum	22 (73%)	3 (10%)	14 (47%)	4 (13%)
Examination subject	8 (27%)	16 (53%)	12 (40%)	22 (74%)
Non examination subject		11 (37%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)
Not to be taught at all				
	n = 30		n = 30	

As revealed in Table 5, the majority of the respondents from Ridge Park (73%) shows a strong preference for English to be used as the medium of instruction rather than isiZulu. Approximately half of the respondents from Mziwamandla prefer English to be used as the medium of instruction, rather than isiZulu. Here the option for isiZulu as the LOLT drops massively as compared to the response

given in Table 3. The majority of the respondents from both schools now shows a strong preference for isiZulu to be taught as an examination subject rather than as the medium of learning. This response is in line with the vast majority of the respondents, especially from Ridge Park College (93%) and 37% from Mziwamandla who choose English to be introduced as early as grade 1 as the LOLT and the reasons they provided for such a choice, as discussed above. On the other hand, the average percentage of the respondents from Mziwamandla who prefer English as against isiZulu as the language of learning puzzled me since the majority indicated earlier on that their understanding ability of English was not as good as IsiZulu (Table 1&2), and the majority of respondents from this school chose isiZulu to be introduced as the medium of learning as early as grade 1 (Table 3). To me the responses of the respondents especially from Mziwamandla, indicate mixed feelings regarding the medium of instruction issue. Whilst they have high regard for English, they would also like isiZulu to be used as the medium of learning. This indicates that learners would like to see the status of indigenous languages being elevated as well, which is a step towards the promotion of multilingualism. Furthermore, one could interpret this divided support between the two languages as confusion as to which language to choose as the medium of instruction. This confusion serves to perpetuate the ongoing debate on mother tongue education versus education in a foreign language issue discussed by Kamwangamalu (1997:240) who states that "The literature indicates that there are two schools of thought on this issue pulling in different directions, one supporting mother-tongue education and the other opposing it". On the other hand, these responses could be interpreted as an indication that learners from both schools would prefer bilingual education, as revealed in Table 3.

Question seven elicited information about which of the two languages the respondents anticipate using mostly in the future in different situations – the private and public domains. Respondents were given three private domains and two public domains to associate with one or two of these languages. The private domains are:

- In their families
- In the area where they plan to live
- In conversations with their friends

The public domains are;

- In interacting with public servants
- In their future professions

The responses revealed that the majority (74%) of respondents from Ridge Park and 58% from Mziwamandla anticipate using English for public domains. 35% from Ridge Park and 58% from Mziwamandla believe that isiZulu is a language that would continue to be used for private domains rather than for public domains. 16% of the respondents from each school anticipate using both languages for both private and public domains. This widescale separation into public and private is a clear indication that the relationship between English and isiZulu is diglossic. The term 'diglossia' as defined by Chick (1998 cited in Extra & Maartens 1998:92) refers to the situation in which two languages are used for quite different functions. English is the 'high' variety language used in most prestigious public domains and isiZulu the 'low' variety used in less prestigious local communities and domestic domains.

4.3 EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was distributed to a total of 20 educators in both schools.

The first five questions were intended to establish some personal information about the educators who answered this questionnaire, including their teaching experience. This information was included as it was believed that this factor might have great influence on the responses given regarding the issue of the language of learning and teaching, although there was no specific question that accommodated such a relationship.

Out of 20 educators who answered this questionnaire, the majority (65%) spoke isiZulu as their first language, whilst the rest, some of whom were from Ridge Park College, spoke English as their first language. Of those respondents, 11 were males and 9 were females, with the majority between the age of 26 and 30. In addition, the majority of educators who answered this questionnaire had between 6 and 10 years teaching experience. 3 had been teaching for 11 to 15 years, and for 16 to 20 years respectively; and only 1 educator had teaching experience of over 20 years. It is to be assumed that educators with longer teaching experience will be likely to be more aware of the issues relating to choice of medium of instruction.

Question six requested the respondents to indicate in which grade they would introduce English or isiZulu as the LOLT across the curriculum, if they had a free choice. Like in the learners' questionnaire, the questions were also open-ended requiring the respondents to give reasons for their choices. The responses are shown in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5 : INTRODUCTION OF *ENGLISH* OR *ISIZULU* AS THE LOLT IN ALL SUBJECTS

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>
GRADE	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>
1	8 (80%)	6 (60%)	7 (70%)	6 (60%)
2				
3	1 (10%)		2 (20%)	
5			1 (10%)	
8	1 (10%)			
10				
TERTIARY				
NOT AT ALL		4 (40%)		4 (40%)
		n = 10		n = 10

The above table reveals that a significant majority of the respondents from both schools opt for both English *and* isiZulu to be introduced as the media of instruction as early as grade 1. It is quite obvious that there is a distinct overlap in these choices, which might be the indication of the respondents' belief in bilingual or dual-medium education. This was also evident in learners' choices (see Table 3 & 4 – learners' questionnaire). However, 40% of the respondents from both schools believe that isiZulu should not be introduced at all as the medium of learning. This choice supports their strong leaning towards English as the medium of instruction.

Some reasons that were given by Mziwamandla educators in favour of the introduction of English at grade 1 were:

- "It is easy to adapt to a new language when you are still young"
- "Most subjects are learnt in English, so children should be taught this language at an early age"
- "The market world which we are exposed to requires that we have a basic need of knowing English well as a language"

Some of the reasons given by Ridge Park College educators were:

- "You adapt easily to a new language when you are still young"
- "It is an international language so it needs to be learnt as early as possible"
- "It is widely spoken and practical"

There are similarities in the reasons given by both learners and educators. It is clear that they both look at the medium of learning and teaching in terms of the future "job interviews" and "the market world".

Some of the common reasons given by educators from both schools in favour of isiZulu were:

- “IsiZulu is one of the black languages that were not recognized by the previous government. So it needs to be recognized now especially here in KwaZulu-Natal”
- “It is our mother tongue and important for basic communication and English comes second”
- “To give recognition for Zulu considering that 80% of KZN population consists of Zulu first language speakers”

Again here there is a similarity in the learners’ and educators’ responses in terms of the need for the status of isiZulu to be elevated, which I view as a step towards promotion of multilingualism in South African schools.

Some reasons given by educators from Ridge Park College in support of not introducing isiZulu at all as the medium of instruction were:

- “Medium of instruction implies that all learning areas are taught in this language. Therefore it must be a language of use later on. IsiZulu being a regional language cannot fulfill this criterion”
- “It is impractical to use isiZulu as the medium of learning bearing in mind books, resources etc. It might be very costly”

Some of the responses from Mziwamandla educators were:

- “It is not an international language”
- “We want our learners to be effective users of English in order to prepare them for the workplace situation. It’s pointless teaching them in Zulu”

Question seven asked the respondents to indicate their preference on the use of English and isiZulu. The responses are indicated in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6 : EDUCATORS' PREFERENCES

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	SCHOOL A	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	SCHOOL B
PREFERENCE	ENGLISH	ISIZULU	ENGLISH	ISIZULU
Medium of instruction	9 (90%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	3 (30%)
Examination subject	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
Non-examination subject		2 (20%)		2 (20%)
Not to be taught at all				
	n = 10		n = 10	

As reflected in the above table, the majority of respondents from both schools clearly favours English as the medium of instruction. A large number of respondents from both schools prefers isiZulu to be taught as an examination subject rather than as the medium of learning. The highest figure of the respondents who opt for English as the medium of learning across the curriculum corresponds with the highest figure of those who opt for its early introduction as the medium of learning, hence the justifying reasons provided in both situations. This shows the power that English has as a language here in South Africa.

Some of the reasons that were provided frequently in both schools for choosing English were:

- "English is still a vitally important language of communication amongst different races here in South Africa"
- "So that learners are advantaged for their future careers"
- "It is easy to master the language if you are taught in it"
- "It is an international language, so learners should be proficient in it"
- "For upward mobility, a person needs to speak English well"

Reasons given by educators from Mziwamandla for choosing isiZulu as the medium of learning were:

- “To reinforce our mother tongue and to change negative attitudes of people towards isiZulu as a black language”
- “For learners to be proud of their mother tongue”
- “To give the language the dignity and value it deserves, just like English”

Reasons given by Ridge Park educators were:

- “That would be one way of elevating the status of black languages in this country”
- “It is high time that black learners learn in their first language as well”

I have decided to include some of the reasons given in favour of isiZulu as the medium of learning and teaching in this section to highlight that educators see the need to elevate the status of indigenous languages in this country, which I perceive as a step towards the recognition of multilingualism.

As in the learners’ questionnaire, question eight required the respondents to choose the language, between English and isiZulu, they anticipate using mostly in the future in private and public situations. As in the case of learners, the responses revealed that the majority of educators from both schools (60% and 80%) believe that English will be mostly used in their future professions. This statement is in line with the justifications that were given for English to be introduced early in grade 1 and as the medium of learning. 60% from both schools anticipate using isiZulu mostly in their families and 50% with friends and in the areas in which they plan to live. Some educators from both schools, just like the learners, anticipate using both English *and* isiZulu in all the situations given. Again for the majority of respondents, English and isiZulu are in a diglossic relationship.

4.4 PARENTS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

Out of 60 questionnaires (see Appendix C), i.e. 30 from each school that were distributed to parents, coincidentally 10 (33%) from each school were returned. The first set of questions was intended to establish some personal information, including the level of education, about the parents who answered the

questionnaire. The level of education was established as I thought that this might be one of the factors that might influence the parents' attitudes towards the issue of the language of learning.

Out of 20 parents, 16 indicated that they were isiZulu first language speakers, whilst 1 indicated that she speaks isiXhosa and 3 considered themselves bilingual in both English and isiZulu. Among them 13 were females and 7 males, with the majority aged between 31 and 40, with only 4 ranging between 41 and 50 years of age.

Regarding the level of education, the largest number of parents from both schools, who participated in this study, had Matric and a diploma. The rest from both schools indicated that they had Matric and a degree, and other qualifications that were not specified in the questionnaire. Some respondents from Mziwamandla had under Matric education or Matric only.

TABLE 7 : LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>
understand everything that was said	7 (70%)	2 (20%)
understand most of what was said	2 (20%)	5 (50%)
understand some of what was said	1 (10%)	3 (30%)
	n = 10	n = 10

There was similarity between the parents' and learners' responses as far as the level of understanding of English, in that the majority of the respondents from Ridge Park College claimed to understand everything whilst the majority from Mziwamandla indicated that they understood most, and not everything, that was said in the English medium when they were still at school. As in the case of learners' responses, the validity of the parents' responses is also questionable.

TABLE 8 : PARENTS' PREFERENCES

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	SCHOOL A	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	SCHOOL B
PREFERENCE	ENGLISH	ISIZULU	ENGLISH	ISIZULU
Medium of instruction	6 (60%)	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	1 (10%)
Examination subject	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)	9 (90%)
Non-examination subject		3 (30%)	1 (10%)	
Not to be taught at all				
	n = 10		n = 10	

The above table shows that the majority of parents from both schools opt for English to be used as the medium of instruction across the curriculum as opposed to isiZulu. It is interesting to note that a significantly higher number of parents from Mziwamandla choose English, compared also to learners' and educators' choices in this issue. The majority thus prefers isiZulu to be used as an examination subject although a small number would rather have isiZulu as a non-exam subject. There is much in common in parents', educators' and learners' responses in their great support for English as the medium of instruction across the curriculum and isiZulu as an examination subject. It is not surprising that most parents have opted for the English medium, given the common perception that English will open the doors of opportunity for their children.

The following are some of the responses from both schools that were given in favour of the English medium:

- "We want our children to get better jobs. So without knowing English this is out"
- "Some black people are now leaving South Africa for overseas jobs. So English is the only international language. IsiZulu cannot provide such opportunities for our children"
- "The people who get better jobs are those who can speak good English"

- “Job interviews are conducted in English not in isiZulu. So isiZulu does not have any future here in South Africa at the moment”
- “IsiZulu should be taught as an exam subject so that even other language speakers can understand it, but not as the medium of learning”

TABLE 9 : INTRODUCTION OF *ENGLISH* OR *ISIZULU* AS THE LOLT ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>
GRADE	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>
1	9 (90%)	5 (50%)	6 (60%)	8 (80%)
2			1 (10%)	
3	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	
5		1 (10%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
8				
10				
TERTIARY				
NOT AT ALL		3 (30%)		1 (10%)
		n = 10		n = 10

The above table reveals a distinct overlap in the parents’ responses from both schools in that the majority from both schools would prefer both English *and* isiZulu to be introduced in grade 1 as the media of learning. Here too there is agreement between parents’, educators’, and learners’ responses: many appear likely to favour dual-medium instruction, which might promote multilingualism in South African education.

The following are some of the parents’ views from Ridge Park College regarding the early introduction of English:

- “The earlier children are exposed to English, the better”

- “Most subjects at school are taught in English, so why would isiZulu be introduced early as the medium of learning?”
- “We decided to send our children to the ex-Model C schools from an early age because we want them to be fluent in English”

Some of the parents’ views from Mziwamandla regarding this issue were:

- “Exposing them to English in the early grades will make them fluent in it”
- “At the moment all subjects are learnt in English. So it is better to expose children early to English”

There seems to be a common perception that the earlier you learn English, the better you will be able to grasp it. This perception echoes some of the tenets of what has come to be known as the “English-only argument”. Philipson (cited by Auerbach 1993:14) argues that the tenets:

“The earlier English is taught, the better the results”

“The more English is taught, the better the results”

“have become the cornerstones of the hegemony of English worldwide” Some subjects in my study seem to subscribe to these tenets. It is believed that the earlier you have access to English, the greater the chance that you will be able to compete for jobs and advance your economic and social status. It goes without saying that as long as people maintain these views, they are going to support the early introduction of English in the curriculum.³

Question 8 on the parents’ questionnaire required the respondents to indicate their perceptions towards English and isiZulu regarding their children’s advancement in life. Table 10 below indicates the respondents’ responses

³ This assertion is confirmed by Moodley’s (1999) study, conducted at Ganges Secondary School on “Language policy and language practice”

TABLE 10 : PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE TWO LANGUAGES

	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL A</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>	<i>SCHOOL B</i>
<i>PERCEPTION</i>	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>	<i>ENGLISH</i>	<i>ISIZULU</i>
Important in child's advancement in life	10 (100%)	7 (70%)	10 (100%)	2 (20%)
No effect on child's advancement in life		2 (20%)		7 (70%)
Preventing child's advancement in life		1 (10%)		3 (30%)
	n = 10		n = 10	

It is clear that all parents from both schools feel that English is vital for their children's advancement in life. What is really interesting, however, is that the majority of parents from Ridge Park College also feel that isiZulu serves this purpose as well, whereas only a few from Mziwamandla agree. This is surprising, given that it is those parents who have placed their children at an English-medium school where isiZulu is only offered as a second language, who are now arguing that isiZulu is also important. Is this because they are possibly realizing that their children are losing isiZulu? Be this as it may, these responses contradict those made earlier on by the parents as presented in Table 9. This contradiction serves to confirm the divided support between the two languages and confusion as to which language to choose, which was already evident in the learners' responses (see Table 4 page 36).

In the last section of the questionnaire the responses revealed that the majority (80%) of parents from Ridge Park College and half (50%) from Mziwamandla anticipate their children using mostly English in their future professions while isiZulu will not be used at all in this situation, but will be used mostly in private domains. The second highest number (60% from Ridge Park and 40% from Mziwamandla) anticipate English being used mostly with public servants. Some respondents from both schools anticipate their children using both English *and*

isiZulu in all the domains including the areas where they plan to live. Black people are now moving to White areas where they would be expected to communicate in English with their neighbours.

4.5 INTERVIEWS

The main reason for conducting informal interviews was to check the validity of respondents' responses to the questionnaires.

Because the question of the attitudes towards the medium of instruction was the main focus of this study, I decided to investigate it further in the interviews with learners, educators and parents. Also, this question had been a closed one in the questionnaire and it had not given the respondents opportunity to substantiate their answers. I also felt that the responses given by the learners from Mziwamandla High School, especially, that they prefer English to isiZulu as the medium of learning, were not in line with the responses they had made earlier on. They had indicated that their ability to understand English was not as good as with isiZulu (Table 2&3). Hence I decided to address this issue further in the informal interviews.

All the learners who were interviewed from both schools chose English as against isiZulu as the medium of learning. Some of them, especially from Mziwamandla, indicated that even though they were not good in English, they needed it in order to meet the demands of the outside world.

Some of the common reasons that were given by learners from Mziwamandla High School in favour of English as the medium of learning during the interviews were:

- "It is an international language"
- "Job interviews are conducted in English"
- "You won't get a better job if you are not fluent in English"
- "So that you can communicate well with other races"

Some of the reasons from Ridge Park were:

- “It is an international language’
- “Zulu is not as powerful as English which opens doors for the future”
- “It is a language which is mostly used even in Parliament for better communication with other races”

Most of the above reasons were in line with those that were given by learners from both schools for introducing English as the medium of learning in grade 1.

Out of 4 educators who were interviewed from Ridge Park College, 3 chose English and 1 chose both isiZulu and English as the medium/a of teaching and learning in all subjects.

The reasons provided for choosing English were:

- “For future careers and upward mobility”
- “It is a powerful language”
- “It’s a widely used language internationally”

The reason for choosing both English and isiZulu was:

- “Since English is a powerful language in South Africa, for isiZulu to gain such power it also needs to be used as the medium of instruction.”

Out of 4 educators from Mziwamandla, 2 chose English, 1 chose isiZulu and 1 chose both English and isiZulu as the medium/a of instruction in all subjects. It was apparent that they all send their children to the English only medium schools “for better education, since black schools lack resources” and so that their children “can be exposed to English”.

The reasons that were offered for choosing English were:

- “It is a language of power in this country”
- “For future upward mobility”

The reason that was yielded for choosing isiZulu was:

- “Black languages need to be recognized in the new South Africa”

The reason that was given for choosing both English *and* isiZulu as the media of learning in all subjects was the same reason that was given by the educator from Ridge Park College, “to elevate its status”.

Parents’ responses during the interviews had much in common. All 7 parents from both schools chose English as the medium of teaching and learning across the curriculum. All their reasons were based on the socioeconomic mobility and advancement in life associated with English. One of the parents from Ridge Park College went further and justified her choice for the early introduction of English as the medium of instruction by saying, “That is why we send our children to ex-Model C schools as early as grade 1, because we want them to be fluent in English so that they can get better jobs.” When the parents from Mziwamandla were asked why they prefer to send their children to black schools, they indicated that they cannot afford to send their children to White schools because of financial constraints. It is clear that if these parents had financial means, like the educators, they would also send their children to ex-Model C schools for better education. The study that was conducted by Ngcobo (2001) on attitudes of parents towards the medium of learning also revealed that a very high number of African teachers (76%) prefer to send their children to English-medium schools rather than to isiZulu-medium ones. In this study, during the interviews, some educators indicated that their reasons for sending their children to English-medium schools was merely a search for better quality of education rather than evidence of a negative attitude towards African languages. To me these responses are an indication that the high esteem in which English is held in terms of the future is one of the contributory factors in choosing a language of learning at the moment here in South Africa.

In subsequent interviews, all the respondents stressed the importance of the knowledge of English to ensure upward socioeconomic mobility in life, which is an instrumental motivation focusing on self-improvement.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed the data collected by means of the methods outlined in chapter three. What emerges in these findings is similarity in all the respondents' responses regarding the medium of instruction issue. The findings reveal that, although there is great support for English being used as the medium of instruction at schools, at the same time the respondents somehow support the promotion of isiZulu as an indigenous language spoken in this province. This is an indication of optimism regarding the future of African languages in South Africa. My conclusion is that, amidst confusion, there is a desire for additive, rather than subtractive bilingualism. On the other hand, it is quite unlikely that the current dominant role and the power of English might change in this country. This was evident in the instrumental value the respondents attach to English in all the data.

When comparing the respondents' responses, learners, educators and parents, to some extent, show support of both languages as media of instruction. The inconsistency of their responses regarding the choice of English or isiZulu as the LOLT and the level in which these languages should be introduced shows confusion as to which language to choose. Whilst the majority choose English as the LOLT, some see the need to uplift the status of the African indigenous languages.

In the concluding chapter I use the analysis of the data as presented in this chapter to discuss the implications of these language attitudes for the implementation of the language-in-education policy in general. I also make recommendations that will assist language policy makers regarding the language-in-education policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes my investigation into learners', educators' and parents' attitudes towards English or/and isiZulu as the LOLT. I first summarize some of the issues I found most revealing in my analysis of the findings. I then outline the implications of the findings for the implementation of the language-in-education policy in general. I also make recommendations that will assist language policy makers regarding the language-in-education policy. Lastly, I highlight the limitations of this study and then propose potential research areas for the future.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The study shows that attitudes differ towards English or/and isiZulu as the medium of instruction across the curriculum. Whilst the majority of learners, educators and parents from both schools highly favour English to be used as the LOLT, some would also like to see isiZulu playing the same role as well. This is evident in the overlap between the responses made by learners, educators and parents in their choice, that both languages be introduced as early as Grade 1 as the media of instruction. This overlap is an indication of mixed feelings that would be likely to favour dual-medium instruction. It also implies an awareness of a need to elevate the status of African indigenous languages, which is a step towards the promotion of multilingualism in South Africa. This is a rather different proposal to what is currently common practice in black schools, where educators mix English with isiZulu to facilitate learning (Adendorff 1993). Even though many black educators and parents in this study indicated that they prefer to send their children to English-medium schools, they still value the use of African languages in the education of African people. Ngcobo (2001:79) also concludes "They [parents] feel that the more their children are exposed to English, the better for their academic success. At the same time, however, they would like to see isiZulu play a role in education".

There is a distinct commonality in learners', educators' and parents' responses in their strong support for English as the LOLT across the curriculum and isiZulu as an examination subject. The responses given by learners, educators and parents from both schools during the interviews also show higher support for English than for isiZulu as the medium of instruction in all subjects. Similarly, in subsequent interviews, all the respondents stressed the importance of the knowledge of English to ensure upward socioeconomic mobility in life. It is obvious that their attitudes are influenced by the instrumental value attached to English. The respondents view English as a powerful economic and educational tool, as the language with higher social status and prestige. Lemmer (1993:83) points out that "a preference for English as the medium of instruction is the result of strong pragmatic incentives because of the socioeconomic mobility associated with the language and its traditional place in commerce". As a result of the language policies before 1994, which did not accord status to the country's African languages, most African people attach little value to their mother tongue. Thus the indigenous languages have little value in the market place, if not combined with proficiency in English.

Furthermore, responses as to the future use of English and isiZulu are also in favour of English. English is considered by educators and parents as a language that will dominate the future lives of their children. All parents also feel that English is vital for their children's advancement in life. English is viewed by the majority of respondents as a language that would be used in public domains, whilst isiZulu is mostly viewed as a language that would be likely to survive only in private domains. This suggests that learners, educators and parents anticipate a future in which the status quo will not change in terms of the language hierarchy. English will continue to be the language of power with more instrumental value than African languages. Thus there is further evidence that the diglossic relationship between English and isiZulu is stabilizing. According to Chick (1998; cited in Extra & Maartens 1998:92) "diglossia strengthens the tendency towards what is termed

‘elite closure’”. He goes on and explains that “only those who are highly proficient in the ‘high’ variety are able to participate effectively in prestigious public domains and readily secure access to educational and economic opportunities and social services” (ibid). It is clear that the choices made by the respondents are largely influenced by this view.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THESE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY

There is a mismatch between the desire of the Department of Education to promote their multilingual policy, and the actual practices of parents who can afford to send their children to multilingual schools.

At the same time, people do appear to hold a positive attitude towards the promotion of indigenous languages, which is a core of the Department of Education’s multilingual policy. This suggests that, if township schools could be given adequate infrastructure, trained educators and security, the rush of parents to register their children in multilingual schools might well be halted, and the Department of Education’s multilingual policy could actually be implemented successfully. This would need to include excellent training in English, as well as in a relevant African language, for all learners.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRENT POLICY

Implications of the new language-in-education policy include a clearly defined accompanying plan that will emphasise the need to use the other official languages alongside English. This can be made possible by first vesting them with some of the status associated with English and thus making them marketable as well. This is known as *‘reverse covert planning’*. Kamwangamalu (2000:247) defines *‘reverse covert planning’* as a process of “vesting a language with power and

perquisites before any attempt to promote it as an instructional medium". An example would be the use of African languages in parliament, government offices, big businesses, education and the media, especially on television in all channels. African languages need to be promoted for administrative and working purposes at higher levels of this country to uplift the status of these languages. This means that competence in one of the African languages should become one of the requirements for access to employment both in the public and the private sectors. Thereafter, a better solution would be to offer genuine bilingual education where English and any African language that dominates in that province will be co-used as media of instruction.

Another recommendation is that there should be language-in-education awareness campaigns directed at all stakeholders, with the aim of publicizing the importance of isiZulu, in the case of KwaZulu-Natal, for access to skilled labour. It is of utmost importance that people be made aware of the economic, political, cultural and educational value of their languages. To support this view, de Wet (2001:123) notes with concern that "a policy to develop and promote indigenous African languages is unlikely to be successful without the active support and participation of the community towards which it is directed". That process should be done hand in hand with the Department of Education providing in-service support for additional language learning to educators. This would entail implementing the minimum requirement for teaching in South Africa, that a teacher be able to teach proficiently in one official language and to be reasonably fluent in another. White educators would also need to be fluent in African languages as well.

Most importantly, educators, as the key stakeholders, should indeed play a vital role in the implementation of the language-in-education policy. To do this successfully, they need to have a better understanding of the policy, what it aims to achieve, and how to go about achieving this, so that they can give it their full support. The Department of Education should develop explicit guidelines for

different types of schools, as to how the language-in-education policy can be effectively implemented, and also monitor its implementation.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

One of the limitations is that in this study comparison was made between School A, which was a girls'-only school and School B, which was composed of both girls and boys. The findings may have been somewhat influenced by this factor. Furthermore, the study was conducted in the urban area, where the schools are better resourced compared to rural schools. There is a possibility that learners from rural schools might have opted for isiZulu as the LOLT, as they are not as exposed to English as those in urban areas. It is for these reasons that I wish to propose further research on this issue, with the main focus on rural areas as well. Such research might focus on the views of learners, educators and parents as regards additive bilingual approaches to the medium of instruction.

5.5 CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of this thesis, it is clear that the implementation of the current language-in-education policy is still problematic. A range of issues still need to be resolved by the Department of Education for its successful implementation. These include, amongst others, finding means of genuinely elevating the status of the African languages by giving them power in the broader social, political, economical and educational context, not just theoretically, but also in practice. It is apparent that the legacy of apartheid Bantu education weighs heavily on indigenous languages, which has rendered them, at present, of little instrumental value. Such perceptions and stereotyped ideas certainly have a bearing on the implementation of the policy. Despite all the good intentions of the government of the day, the new language-in-education policy has not yet, save on paper, succeeded in correcting this legacy.

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APPENDIX A **QUESTIONNAIRE - LEARNERS**

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS INTENDED TO FIND OUT WHAT LEARNERS FEEL ABOUT THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION ISSUE.

You are not required to put your name to this document.

1. What is the first language that you spoke as a child?

.....

(If you learnt more than one language at the same time write both/all the languages)

2. What was the language of instruction (i.e. the language in which all subjects were taught) in your schooling after Grade 4?

.....

3. How would you rate your ability in the following languages : (Put a cross)

LANGUAGES	ENGLISH	ZULU	AFRIKAANS	OTHER
READING				
Good				
Average				
Poor				
No skill at all				
WRITING				
Good				
Average				
Poor				
No skill at all				
SPEAKING				
Good				
Average				
Poor				
No skill at all				
LISTENING				
Good				
Average				
Poor				
No skill at all				

4. When lessons are taught in English, do you : (Mark with a cross)

understand everything that is said	
understand most of what is said	
understand some of what is said	

5a. If you had a free choice, when would you introduce English as a language of learning (medium of instruction) in all subjects? (Mark with a cross)

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Tertiary	Not at all

Please explain the reason/s for the above choice you have made

.....

5b. If you had a free choice, when would you introduce isiZulu as a language of learning (medium of instruction) in all subjects? (Mark with a cross)

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Tertiary	Not at all

Please explain the reason/s for the above choice you have made

.....

6a. Would you prefer English : (Mark with a cross)

to be taught as an examination subject at your school	
to be taught as a non-examination subject at your school	
to be used as a medium of learning (i.e. to teach all subjects) at your school	
not to be taught at all	

6b. Would you prefer isiZulu : (Mark with a cross)

to be taught as an examination subject at your school	
to be taught as a non-examination subject at your school	
to be used as a medium of learning (i.e. to teach all subjects) at your school	
not to be taught at all	

7. What language, between English (E) and isiZulu (Z), do you anticipate using mostly in future in the following situations? Write the language (use E or Z) next to the situation. If you anticipate using more than one language more or less equally, indicate that :

In your family

In the area where you plan to live

In conversations with your friends

In interacting with public servants

In your future profession

Thank you for answering this questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE - EDUCATORS

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS INTENDED TO FIND OUT WHAT EDUCATORS FEEL ABOUT THE LANGUAGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ISSUE.

I would appreciate your time in completing this questionnaire. I am trying to collect information regarding the medium of instruction issue. I am going to use this information for the purpose of research. **You are not required to put your name to this document.**

1. What is the first language that you spoke as a child?

.....
(If you learnt more than one language at the same time write both/all)

2. (Mark with a cross)

MALE	FEMALE
------	--------

3. (Mark with a cross)

AGE GROUP	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50

4. Teaching experience in years (Mark with a cross)

1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40

5. Name of school where you teach

.....

- 6a. If you had a free choice, when would you introduce English as a medium of instruction across the curriculum? (Mark with a cross)

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Tertiary	Not at all

Please explain the reason/s for the above choice you have made

.....
.....

- 6b. If you had a free choice, when would you introduce isiZulu as a medium of instruction across the curriculum? (Mark with a cross)

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Tertiary	Not at all

Please explain the reason/s for the above choice you have made

.....
.....

7a. Would you prefer English : (Mark with a cross)

to be taught as an examination subject at schools	
to be taught as a non-examination subject at schools	
to be used as a medium of instruction across the curriculum at schools	
not to be taught at all	

Support the above choice you have made

.....

7b. Would you prefer isiZulu : (Mark with a cross)

to be taught as an examination subject at schools	
to be taught as a non-examination subject at schools	
to be used as a medium of instruction across the curriculum at schools	
not to be taught at all	

Support the above choice you have made

.....

8. Which language, between isiZulu (Z) and English (E), do you anticipate your learners would use mostly in future in the following situations? Write the language (use Z or E) next to the situation. If you anticipate they would use more than one language more or less equally, indicate that:

- In their families
- In the area where they plan to live
- In conversations with their friends
- In interacting with public servants
- In their future profession

I WOULD LIKE TO INTERVIEW SOME OF THE EDUCATORS WHO ANSWERED THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE INDICATE BY MEANS OF A CROSS :

I am willing to be interviewed	
I am not willing to be interviewed	

Thank you for answering this questionnaire.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE - PARENTS

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS INTENDED TO FIND OUT WHAT PARENTS FEEL ABOUT THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION ISSUE.

I would appreciate your time in completing this questionnaire. I am trying to collect information regarding the language of instruction issue. I am going to use this information for the purpose of research. **You are not required to put your name to this document.**

1. What is the first language that you spoke as a child?

.....
(If you learnt more than one language at the same time write both/all languages)

2. (Mark with a cross)

MALE	FEMALE
------	--------

3. (Mark with a cross)

AGE GROUP	25-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50
-----------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

4. What is your level of education? (Mark with a cross)

Under Matric	
Matric	
Matric + Diploma	
Matric + Degree	
Other	

5. When lessons were taught in English when you were still at school, did you :
(Mark with a cross)

understand everything that was said	
understand most of what was said	
understand some of what was said	

- 6a. If you had a free choice, would you prefer English : (Mark with a cross)

to be taught as an examination subject at your child's school	
to be taught as a non-examination subject at your child's school	
to be used as a medium of learning (i.e. to teach all subjects) at the school	
not to be taught at all	

6b. If you had a free choice, would you prefer isiZulu : (Mark with a cross)

to be taught as an examination subject at your child's school	
to be taught as a non-examination subject at your child's school	
to be used as a medium of learning (i.e. to teach all subjects) at the school	
not to be taught at all	

7a. When would you prefer English to be introduced as a medium of learning in all subjects? (Mark with a cross)

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Tertiary	Not at all

7b. When would you prefer isiZulu to be introduced as a medium of learning in all subjects? (Mark with a cross)

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10	Tertiary	Not at all

8a. Do you see English : (Mark with a cross)

As important in your child's advancement in life	
As having no effect on your child's advancement in life	
As preventing your child's advancement in life	

8b. Do you see isiZulu : (Mark with a cross)

As important in your child's advancement in life	
As having no effect on your child's advancement in life	
As preventing your child's advancement in life	

9. Which language, between isiZulu (Z) and English (E), do you anticipate your child would use mostly in future in the following situations? Write the language (use Z or E) next to the situation. If you anticipate s/he would use more than one language more or less equally, indicate that :

- In his/her family
- In the area in where he/she plans to live
- In conversations with his/her friends
- In interacting with public servants
- In his/her future profession

I WOULD LIKE TO INTERVIEW SOME OF THE PARENTS WHO ANSWERED THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE INDICATE BY MEANS OF A CROSS :

I am willing to be interviewed	
I am not willing to be interviewed	

Thank you for answering this questionnaire.