

**THE ELEVEN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING**

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<b>Foreword</b>	v
<b>Summary</b>	vi
<b>Opsomming</b>	vii
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	1
1.1    The Problem Defined	1
1.2    Purpose of the Study	5
1.3    Method of Research	5
1.4    Overview of the Study	5
<b>Chapter 2: Language Policy in SA: an overview</b>	7
2.1    Introduction	7
2.2    Language Policy Prior to 1993	7
2.2.1    Mother Tongue Instruction Policies	7
2.2.1.1    Mother Tongue Instruction Policies for Blacks	8
2.2.1.2    Mother Tongue Instruction Policies for Coloureds	11
2.2.1.3    Mother Tongue Instruction Policies for Indians	12
2.2.1.4    Mother Tongue Instruction Policies for Whites	12
2.3    Rationale for Adopting the Eleven Official Language Policy	16
2.3.1    Introduction	16
2.3.2    Linguistic Diversity in S.A.	16
2.3.3    Need for Redressing Historical Imbalances	20
2.4    Principles of the Eleven Official Language Policy	21
2.4.1    The Principle of Multilingualism	21
2.4.2    Need to Redress Historical Imbalances	22
2.4.3    Policy of Regional Differentiation	23

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2.4.4	National and Provincial Language of Record	23
2.4.5	Language Planning	24
2.4.6	Right to Basic Education	25
2.5	Dealing with Language Rights	27
2.5.1	Language Rights in a Bill of Rights	27
2.5.2	Language Rights in Language Charters	30
2.6	Conclusion	34
<b>Chapter 3: Language Planning in SA</b>		<b>36</b>
3.1	Introduction	36
3.2	Principles of Language Planning	36
3.3	Language Planning in Multilingual Settings	38
3.3.1	Introduction	38
3.3.2	Canada	38
3.3.3	Tanzania	41
3.3.4	Language Planning in Multilingual S.A	43
3.3.4.1	Language Planning Prior to 1993	43
3.3.4.1.1	African Languages	43
3.3.4.1.2	Afrikaans	48
3.3.4.1.3	English	53
3.3.5	Language Planning After 1993	57
3.3.5.1	Regional Language Status Planning	58
3.3.5.2	Medium of Instruction Policy	60
3.3.5.3	Pan South African Language Board	61
3.4	Conclusion	63

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<b>Chapter 4: Medium of Instruction in Multilingual Societies</b>	<b>66</b>
4.1 Introduction	66
4.2 Models of Bilingual Education	67
4.2.1 Submersion Education	67
4.2.2 Transitional Bilingual Education	70
4.2.3 Immersion Language Instruction	74
4.2.4 European Bilingual School Models	80
4.2.4.1 Trilingual Education in Luxembourg	81
4.2.4.2 European School Network	82
4.2.4.3 Foyer Model of Brussels	83
4.2.4.4 Evaluation	85
4.2.5 Community Language Project	86
4.3 Model for Multilingual Instruction	90
4.4 Conclusion	94
<b>Chapter 5: Implications for Language Teaching</b>	<b>96</b>
5.1 Introduction	96
5.2 Which Language/Dialect to Teach?	96
5.2.1 Introduction	96
5.2.2 Are Speakers of Non-Standard Varieties Verbally Deficient?	97
5.2.3 Do Pupils Fail at School because of Their Language?	99
5.2.4 How Should Schools Handle Dialectal Diversity?	100
5.2.5 Should Schools Use a Standard Version?	104
5.3 Assessment Instruments	109
5.3.1 Introduction	109
5.3.2 Need for a New Kind of Assessment	109
5.3.3 Language Testing in Multilingual Contexts	111

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5.3.4	Structure of Communicative Competence	115
5.4	Teacher Training Programmes	120
5.4.1	Introduction	120
5.4.2	Curriculum of Teacher Training	121
5.5	Conclusion	126
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations</b>		<b>128</b>
6.1	Introduction	128
6.2	Main Findings	128
6.3	Recommendations for further Research	131
6.4	Conclusion	133
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>135</b>
<b>Tables</b>		
Table 2.3.2a SA Languages and their Speakers		18
Table 2.3.2b Home Languages in the Nine Regions		19

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φύονται δὲ καὶ νέοις  
ἐν ἀνδράσιν πολιαί  
θαμάκι παρὰ τὸν ἀλικίας εἰκότα χρόνον.  
(Pindar, *Olympian* 4.25-26)

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## The Eleven Official Languages Policy and its Implications for Language Teaching

This study investigates the question of how multilingualism prescribed by the interim Constitution of 1993 will affect the teaching of language.

In addressing this question issues such as language policy in SA, the extent of language planning done for SA languages, and the use of media of instruction in multilingual societies are examined. Three implications of multilingualism on the teaching of language are also discussed. They are: the language/dialect to be taught, the effect of multilingualism on assessment instruments, and its effect on the training of teachers.

The extent of language planning done for Afrikaans and English has proved to be sufficient for their use as media of instruction. However, the lexis of African languages appears currently inadequate for their use as media of instruction beyond post-primary years. Issues of language standardisation and dialectal variation also obstruct their utilisation as media of instruction.

Based upon developments in European bilingual and trilingual education systems a new model of multilingual instruction is proposed which provides for mother tongue instruction in the primary school and instruction in the second language in preparation for subject content teaching in the secondary school. To establish the principle of multilingualism it is proposed that pupils learn at least three of the official regional languages.

Concerning the language/dialect to be taught it is suggested that schools teach a standardised variety to combat victimisation associated with non-standard dialects. The multilingual approach in education also requires new assessment instruments developed for the purpose of placement and the assessment of academic achievement. A vital aspect of multilingual education is teacher training. This training needs to focus on the eradication of racial prejudices at school, and on producing multilingual teachers who can handle dialectal diversity with sensitivity and understanding.

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## The Eleven Official Languages Policy and its Implications for Language Teaching

Hierdie studie ondersoek die vraagstuk hoe veeltaligheid, soos gedefinieer deur die tussentydse Grondwet van 1993, die onderrig van taal sal beïnvloed.

In die beantwoording van hierdie vraag is aangeleenthede soos taalbeleid in S.A., die omvang van taalbeplanning in S.A., en die gebruik van onderrig-tale in veeltalige gemeenskappe ondersoek. Drie implikasies van veeltaligheid op taal-onderrig is ook nagevors. Hulle behels die taal/dialek waarin onderrig moet word, die effek van veeltaligheid op toetsing, en op die opleiding van onderwysers.

Die taalbeplanning wat gedoen is in Afrikaans en Engels het hulle geskiktheid as onderrig-tale bewys. Die beperkte leksikon van Afrika-tale skyn die belangrikste struikelblok te wees in hulle gebruik as onderrig-tale ná die primêre fase. Taalstandardisasie-aangeleenthede en dialek-verskeidenheid beperk verder hulle aanwending as onderrig-tale.

Gebaseer op ontwikkelinge in Europese twee- en drietalige onderrig-sisteme word 'n nuwe model van veeltalige onderrig voorgestel wat voorsiening maak vir moedertaal-onderrig in die primêre skool en opleiding in die tweede taal, ter voorbereiding vir 'n oorgang na tweede taal-onderrig aan die sekondêre skool. Daar word verder voorgestel dat leerlinge ten minste drie van die amptelike streekstale aanleer om die beginsel van veeltaligheid te vestig.

Met betrekking tot die taal/dialek waarin onderrig gegee moet word, word voorgestel dat skole 'n standaard-taal moet doseer om viktimisasie, wat met nie-standaardtale geassosieer word, te voorkom. Die veeltalige benadering in onderwys vereis ook dat nuwe toetsinstrumente vir plasing-doeleindes en die toetsing van akademiese prestasie ontwikkel moet word. 'n Wesentlike aspek van veeltalige onderwys is die opleiding van onderwysers. Dié opleiding moet fokus op die uitskakeling van rasse-vooroordeel op skool en die voorsiening van veeltalige onderwysers wat die dialektiese verskeidenheid met sensitiwiteit en insig kan hanteer.

## 1.1 The Problem Defined

Language policy prior to 1993 recognised only English and Afrikaans as official languages in South Africa. Legislation provided for the establishment of various ethnic regions, and by implication also for the introduction of the mother tongue as official language in each region, yet it remains unclear which language(s) were actually used as official language(s) or as media of instruction (cf. NEPI, 1994:26). Although mother tongue instruction was legally provided for African children (Act No 47 of 1953, and Act No 90 of 1979), African communities were in general strongly opposed to mother tongue instruction because of its association with the apartheid regime and the perceived low status of African languages (NEPI, op. cit.:27-30).

The 1993 Constitution, with special language clauses, was the first piece of legislation which truly reflected the multilingual nature of South African society. The language clauses (Section 3) of the Constitution determine, *inter alia*, that the Constitution shall recognise eleven official languages - Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu - and that existing language rights, namely those of Afrikaans and English, shall not be diminished.

Section 3, read together with Section 32 (affirming mother tongue instruction where 'reasonably practicable' as a basic human right) has caused much debate, especially on the feasibility of providing equal public access to affairs of State for all languages, and providing education through the mother tongue. Section 8(2) determines, furthermore, that 'No person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and, without derogating from the generality of this provision, on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethnic, or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language'. This clause has been interpreted, especially by the ANC, to mean that no school will be allowed to bar pupils from entrance, even on language grounds.

One may therefore safely assume that this Section of the 1993 Constitution will lead to major changes in education, as far as the composition of schools, subject curricula, and especially language curricula are concerned. Regional language differentiation, provided for by

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Section 3(4), will require that all the languages of a given region be taught, most likely as compulsory subjects, at school level.

It is important to observe that the 1993 Constitution, and its special language clauses, introduce, *legally*, a new principle which has to be pursued, namely that of multilingualism. Multilingualism refers to the co-existence of more than two, autonomous languages in a particular geographical region. For the various assumptions inherent in the notion of multilingualism, see Posner (1991:127-132).

The problem posed by the introduction of the eleven official languages policy is thus essentially that of multilingualism in multilingual societies.

Therefore, the question to be researched is:

*How will the notion of multilingualism, as prescribed by the 1993 Constitution, affect the teaching of language?*

The notion of multilingualism will obviously have certain implications on the teaching of language. These implications will now be discussed briefly.

Although South Africa has to find its own solutions to the issue of how the policy of eleven official languages, and thus of multilingualism, will affect the teaching of language at school, it is imperative to take cognizance of research done on the issue of multilingualism in multilingual societies.

The principle of multilingualism cannot be implemented at school level without proper language planning and clear directives to educational bodies. The following are clear examples of such language planning within the European Community: the *Council Regulation I* (1958, reprinted by Coulmas, 1991:38-39), determines the languages to be used in the European Economic Community; *Council Directive (77/486/EEC of 1977*, reprinted by Coulmas, op. cit.:40-41) stipulates the languages that should be taught to migrant workers in member states; and the *Arifé Resolution*, adopted by the European Parliament on 16 October, calls for a Community Charter for Regional languages and Cultures (reprinted by Coulmas, op. cit.:42-43).

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An urgent question, connected to the above issue, which should now be addressed in South Africa, even before a policy of mother tongue instruction can be implemented, is how language differentiation is going to be applied in the nine provinces. Of the nine provinces, only the Western Cape has announced its proposals regarding the official languages to be recognised (Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa). Because the Constitution requires that the existing rights of Afrikaans and English not be diminished, provincial legislators will have to recognise as official languages Afrikaans, English, plus one or two regional African languages. Schuring's (1990) data on the regional distribution of South African indigenous languages may be used to determine the official languages of each province.

The other thorny issue, namely which language/dialect will be taught in a given area, has not been addressed by language planners in the Western Cape.

Language learning, before the enactment of the 1993 Constitution, was mainly concerned with the policy of official bilingualism in Afrikaans and English. Within this framework mother tongue instruction occupied a central position. This policy led, *inter alia*, to a devaluation of the African languages both at national and school level. The principle of multilingualism enshrined in the interim Constitution requires that education authorities look at issues affecting the teaching of languages beyond the ambit of official bilingualism. Developments in European multilingual education may offer suggestions as to how schools may promote multilingual instruction, the learning of more than two languages, and how pupils may acquire near native-like proficiency in a second language.

Section 32 of the 1993 Constitution provides for mother tongue instruction where practicable. Traditional school systems often teach a standardised version of a language. Language policy in multilingual settings, however, tends to focus on the dialect that the child brings to the multilingual classroom. That individuals have a right to their own mother tongue, or dialect thereof, in the school system, has been recognised by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (1972, cf. Lourie and Conklin, 1978) in the USA. The Language Charter proposed by Brumfit (1995:12-15) also supports this policy trend. It is clear that this trend will seriously impact the content of any language course.

Locally a similar problem has been experienced with the teaching of *Standaard Afrikaans* versus *Kaapse Afrikaans* (a variety spoken mainly in the Western Cape by the so-

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called Coloured People) (Reagan, 1986:80). A similar conflict of interest has surfaced in the teaching of English. Current teaching of English is seen by some Africans as the teaching of the white man's language. Ndebele (1991), therefore, proposes that more recognition be given to the African variety of English.

The impact of multilingual education on language assessment will be threefold. Firstly, a new kind of assessment is required. Because language assessment still reflects the past ideology of official bilingualism in Afrikaans and English, it needs to be adapted to meet the requirements of a multilingual situation. Secondly, most language tests at present are set for monolinguals. Multilingual language teaching, however, will demand a new kind of test. Thirdly, because multilingualism requires the test maker to emphasise in his/her tests what a pupil can *do* with language, instead of what he *knows* about language, the concept of language ability needs clarification.

Multilingualism has also profound implications for the training of teachers. In particular, one needs to know how the curriculum of teacher training has to be adapted to confront typical problems associated with multilingual education. Some of these problems are:

- Parochialism and racism are often considered endemic conditions in multilingual education programmes.
- There is frequently a dire shortage of competently trained bilingual teachers.
- Intolerance and disrespect for dialectal differences are prevalent among teachers and pupils

The research question can, therefore, be broken down into the following subquestions:

- Has enough language planning been done in South Africa to implement a policy of mother tongue instruction as was assumed to be possible under the old order?
- How can multilingual instruction be implemented at school?
- If and when the policy of mother tongue instruction is implemented, which language/dialect in a given area will be taught? These questions not only pertain to African languages, but also to Afrikaans and English.
- How will multilingualism affect assessment instruments?
- What implications will multilingualism hold for teacher training?

## 1.2 Purpose of this Study

The aims of this study are to:

- Determine whether the extent of language planning done in the eleven official languages is sufficient to sustain a policy of mother tongue instruction (Chapters 2-4),
- Propose a model for multilingual instruction at school (Chapter 4);
- Reflect on the question which language(s) and which dialects should be taught (Chapter 5),
- Examine the influence of multilingualism on the development of assessment instruments (Chapter 5), and
- Determine the implications of a policy of multilingualism for the training of teachers (Chapter 5).

## 1.3 Method of Research

The method will consist of a detailed review of the literature. A comparative study of the effect of multilingualism on the teaching of language in other countries will be done. How these experiences may be useful to the situation in South Africa will also be investigated, from which conclusions will be drawn.

## 1.4 Overview of the Study

Chapter 2 aims, firstly, to situate the language clauses of the interim Constitution of 1993 within the broader context of past language-in-education policies in South Africa. Secondly, a brief discussion of these clauses is offered. Although several principles underscore these clauses, the element of multilingualism is the primary focus of the Constitution of 1993 concerning language.

Chapter 3 investigates the extent of language planning done in South Africa for the different languages in South Africa. Language planning efforts are discussed from two perspectives: those done before 1993 and those after. Since 1993 language planning has become the

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central concern of a united body, namely the Pan South African Language Board, whereas in the past language planning was done fragmentally by various bodies.

The aim of Chapter 4 is twofold: firstly, an analysis is offered of how media of instruction policies in multilingual education are handled; secondly, based upon the above discussion, conclusions are drawn about media of instruction policies in a multilingual South Africa.

Chapter 5 investigates three important implications of an official policy of multilingualism on the teaching of language. These are: which language or dialect should be taught?, how does multilingualism affect assessment at school?, and what effect does multilingualism have on the training of teachers? This chapter deals with what can possibly be regarded as the crux of multilingualism in South African education.

The major conclusions of this study are presented in Chapter 6, as well as a number of recommendations for future study.

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## 2.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to contextualise the interim Constitution of 1993 within the present debate about language policy and language planning in South Africa.

Firstly, a brief overview of past language policy will be provided. Because this study intends to investigate the effects of the 1993 Constitution on the teaching of language, the focus will be on language in educational policies, the languages offered as subjects by the various Departments of Education, and policy options regarding the medium of instruction. Since most language clauses of the 1993 Constitution bear relevance to language policy issues that came into effect since 1948, the discussion will also focus on policy issues from this period.

Secondly, a brief discussion of the main principles underlying the 1993 Constitution will be offered.

In conclusion, the intention is to highlight two ways of dealing with language issues in multilingual societies: the first seeks to enshrine language policy issues within a Bill of Rights, while the second prefers to deal with these issues within a Language Charter.

## 2.2 Language Policy prior to the 1993 Constitution

Education language policy prior to the 1993 Constitution was shaped by three important factors, namely insistence on the principle of mother tongue instruction (cf. Reagan, 1986b:3), racial classification, and centralist planning (NEPI, 1994). The issues of racial classification and centralist planning will not be discussed separately, but will be referred to under the heading **Mother Tongue Instruction Policies**.

### 2.2.1 Mother Tongue Instruction Policies

According to Reagan (ibid.) the cornerstone of education language policy since 1948 has been the principle of mother tongue instruction which was applied to all population groups in South Africa.

At the heart of this principle is the belief that a child should receive his/her first years of schooling, and preferably the greater part of his/her schooling, in his/her mother tongue.

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The philosophy of providing racially segregated education to Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and Whites was enshrined in the Population Registration Act (1950).

### **2.2.1.1 Mother Tongue Instruction Policies For Blacks**

Prior to 1953, the education of the Black child was mainly the responsibility of missionary schools which saw the acquisition of a European language, together with the evangelisation of Africans, as their major aims. The medium of instruction was, therefore, mainly English (Reagan and Ntshoe, 1987:2; NEPI, 1994:27).

An exception to this situation occurred in 1884 when the Natal Council of Education, which was responsible for Black education in the province, decided to introduce Zulu, together with English, as media of instruction (Hartshorne, 1987:86).

In the first decades of the present century missionary schools, ostensibly under the influence of the Continental European missions, began to introduce Black vernacular languages as media of instruction (Hartshorne, *ibid.*; Reagan and Ntshoe, *ibid.*).

A watershed period in Black education appeared when the National Party, with its policy of apartheid, came to power in 1948. The National Party, which had a long history of resisting the linguistic and cultural assimilation of its Afrikaner constituency into the English language and culture, increasingly superimposed its own ideological language struggle upon Black education.

The enactment of the Bantu Education Act (Act No. 47) in 1953, reflected the Afrikaner's struggle against cultural assimilation into English, especially in its attempts to curb the influence of English. The Bantu Education Act (Act No. 47 of 1953), therefore, addressed three issues. First, it transferred the responsibility of educating Black children from missionary schools to the Department of Native Affairs. Secondly, it made mother tongue instruction compulsory in the primary school, and introduced pupils to both English and Afrikaans in the

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first year of schooling.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the Black child received instruction in three languages during the initial schooling years. Thirdly, it sought to establish Afrikaans as the preferred medium of instruction at the higher levels of education in order to diminish the influence of English (Hartshorne, op. cit.:88; Reagan and Ntshoe, op. cit.:3; Cluver, 1992:115).

The insistence in the Bantu Education Act on mother tongue instruction was clearly based upon the Eiselen Commission (1951), which stated that 'effective education is only possible through the medium of the mother tongue' (Eiselen Commission, 1951:paragraph 1001).

The media of instruction in secondary schools were also Afrikaans and English.<sup>2</sup> This would eventually become known as the infamous and notorious 50:50 policy.<sup>3</sup> As the NEPI report (op. cit.:28) points out, the 50:50 policy is actually somewhat of a misnomer, because mother tongue instruction was retained for Religious Education and Physical Education (the non-examination subjects). Opposition to the Bantu Education Act was instantaneous and came from various quarters, such as parents, teachers, various organisations, and churches (cf. Hartshorne, op. cit.).

The grievances and opposition to the Bantu Education Act eventually culminated in the Soweto student uprising of June 1976. Although there is general consent that the

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<sup>1</sup> The Bantu Education Act (Act No. 47 of 1953) here clearly sought to entrench and expand the influence of Afrikaans by introducing it as a compulsory subject together with English (Hartshorne, op. cit.:91). The Eiselen Commission (1951) originally recommended that the first official language, that is, the language used in the neighbourhood of the school, be introduced in the second year of schooling. The second official language was to be introduced not later than the fourth year.

<sup>2</sup> The Eiselen Commission (1951) proposed that, in secondary schools, only one official language should be compulsory. The second official language, which would be an optional subject, would then have the same status as a third language. The legislators responsible for drafting the Bantu Education Act obviously feared that this recommendation would relegate Afrikaans to a third language in Black education (Hartshorne, op. cit.:91).

<sup>3</sup> The 50:50 policy often came in for harsh criticism. Firstly, it defeated the ideal of mother tongue instruction, and, secondly, it burdened the African child with two extra media of instruction. A better solution would have been, as Kroes suggests (1978:180), to use the medium best known to pupil and teacher.

unacceptability of the 50:50 policy and the imposition of Afrikaans as medium of instruction were the root causes for the student uprising (Cillie, 1980; Hartshorne, op. cit.; Reagan and Ntshoe, op. cit.; Cluver, op. cit.), there were obviously other contributing factors, such as teacher competencies in language, and problems related to certification (King and van den Berg, 1992:8). Government, realising the objectionable nature of the 50:50 policy, relented its strict language policy, so that by 1977 English was the only language of instruction in most DET schools (NEPI, op. cit.:28) after the fourth year of schooling.

Reagan (1986b:6) writes: 'The mother tongue principle, especially as it pertains to black education, is without doubt the most controversial aspect of educational language policy in South Africa'. It is interesting to observe that Unesco released in 1951, two years prior to the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act, a report in which it says 'that every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue'. The question thus arises why African communities have resisted mother tongue instruction in South Africa.<sup>4</sup> Reagan (op. cit.:4) names five reasons why mother tongue instruction has met with opposition from African communities. They are:<sup>5</sup>

- Mother tongue instruction policies necessarily lead to racially segregated schools;
- Mother tongue instruction policies deny Black children access to English, the 'language of wider communication', and of access to the international community;
- Mother tongue policies are an attempt to 'divide and conquer', and to retribalise Africans;
- The African languages are inadequate for education, and are 'intellectual barriers' for their speakers; and,
- Mother tongue instruction policies are enforced by Whites upon Blacks knowing that the latter are bitterly opposed to them.

<sup>4</sup> There is, of course, a fundamental difference between Unesco and the Bantu Education Act's promotion of mother tongue instruction: the latter sought to entrench the position of Afrikaans, while the former attempts to deal with a potentially disruptive relationship in education, namely that between home and school. Unesco (1951) is thus of the view that '(T)he use of the mother tongue will promote better understanding between the home and school when the child is taught in the language of the home'.

<sup>5</sup> For a rebuttal of these accusations see Reagan (1986a, 1986b), and Reagan and Ntshoe (op. cit.).

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The Government further softened its language policy when it amended the Education and Training Act (Act No. 90 of 1979). This act again made provision for mother tongue instruction in the lower levels of primary school, but for parental choice as far as medium of instruction is concerned after Std 2. The amendments of Act No. 90 of 1979 were only accepted by the Department of Education and Training in 1990, and in June 1991 three policy options were offered to parents of children at DET schools (cf. DET circular, May 1992, and NEPI, op. cit.:29):

- '*Straight for the long term medium*'. This option allows parents to choose either English or Afrikaans or an African language as medium of instruction from the inception of Sub A. The Department of Education and Training, however, warns parents that, where this option has been chosen elsewhere in Africa, the results have been 'disappointing'.
- '*A sudden transfer from the mother tongue to a second language medium*'. This option used to be the policy of the Department of Education and Training (see above). Because the Department assumes that parents will prefer the second language medium to be English, it cautions parents against the dangers of switching to a L2 medium before the child has acquired an adequate foundation in the L1, and vocabulary of the L2.
- '*A graduated transfer from the mother tongue to a second language medium*'. This option provides for a stepped transition from L1 medium to a L2 medium.

### 2.2.1.2 Mother Tongue Instruction Policies For Coloureds

Parliament adopted the Coloured Persons Education Act (Act No. 47 of 1963) in 1963, effectively transferring the control of Coloured education from the provincial administrations to the Department of Coloured Affairs established in 1958. This act determined that schools must offer instruction in the predominant language of the school's feeding area.

The policy caused concern for parents of Coloured children because of two reasons (NEPI, 1994:31):

- It did not take into account the wishes of those parents who preferred English as medium of instruction; and,

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- The dialects spoken in the Coloured community often deviated from Standard Afrikaans taught at school.

Responsibility for Coloured Education transferred in 1983 to the Department of Coloured Affairs with the establishment of the tricameral Parliament.

### **2.2.1.3 Mother Tongue Instruction Policies For Indians**

The education of Indian children used to be the provenance of provincial councils; in Natal since 1894, and in Transvaal from 1913 (NEPI, 1994:31). The Indian Education Act (Act No. 61 of 1965) transferred this responsibility to the Department of Indian Affairs.

No mother tongue instruction was offered to Indian children (King and van den Berg, 1992:5); instruction occurred in the official language dominant in an area, which was mostly English. Indian languages, however, were offered as optional subjects (King and van den Berg, *ibid.*).

As was the case with Coloured education, responsibility for Indian education transferred to the Minister of Education and Culture in the House of Delegates in 1983 with the establishment of the tricameral Parliament.

### **2.2.1.4 Mother Tongue Instruction Policies For Whites**

Bilingualism in Afrikaans and English has always been the aim of language education policy for Whites. The origins of the dual official language policy go back to the decisions on language taken at the Union Convention of 1909, and expressed by Article 137 of the 1910 Constitution:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Article 137 of the 1910 Constitution is of importance, because it establishes bilingualism as an education objective (Reagan, 1987:135).

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Both the English and Dutch languages shall be official languages of the Union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality and possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights and privileges.

Although Afrikaans replaced Dutch as an official language only in 1925, the first Afrikaans medium primary school had already been established in 1914 in the Cape Province (Kroes, 1978:169), and the first Afrikaans secondary schools in 1917. These events formed part of a process in which Afrikaans began to replace Dutch in the school system (Hartshorne, 1987:87).

However, dual medium schools were the rule up to 1948, especially in the Orange Free State and Transvaal. NEPI (1994:31), for example, cites a parliamentary debate in 1906 in which Jan Hofmeyr argued in favour of dual-medium education:

I prefer myself to see our children of different denominations and different languages educated in one and the same school. I think that it is more in harmony with the bilingual system and I would arrange schools accordingly. ... I would like the English boy to learn Dutch from the Dutch boy, and the Dutch boy to learn English from his English comrade in the school and with whom he is going to mix in life after school. ... I feel that every child should be taught at the commencement of his school career in the language of his parents, i.e., his own language, then as soon as possible, you should have mixed classes. And, if the teacher knows Dutch as well as English, he can teach in two languages in the same class, and the children will learn more of the two languages in this way than they would otherwise do.

Between the 1920s and 1930s the National Party of Dr D.F. Malan, supported by the Afrikaner Broederbond and the Dutch Reformed Church, began to mount pressure for separate language schools, mother tongue instruction, and a Christian National education policy (Hartshorne, op. cit.:88; Reagan, 1987:135-136). In 1948, when the National Party came to power, dual medium schools were gradually turned into single medium schools with the other official language offered only as a compulsory subject.<sup>7</sup> Both official languages had to be

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<sup>7</sup> A Language Ordinance was passed in 1949 making mother tongue instruction compulsory in Std. 8. However, parents in Natal still had a say in the medium of instruction up to 1967 (NEPI, op. cit.:31).

taken from Sub A onwards (NEPI, op. cit.:30-31). Single medium schools became the only legal option in 1967 with the passing of the National Education Policy Act (Act No. 39 of 1967), which stipulated that 'the mother tongue must be the medium of instruction' (Reagan, op. cit.:136).

In 1988 the Government enacted the Education Affairs Act (Act No. 70), which provided parents a greater, but still limited, say in educational matters. The Educational Affairs Act granted existing state-funded, public schools the following options:

- To remain a public school, that is, a school funded entirely by government (Sections 12-13). Schools which chose this option later became known as Model A schools;
- To become a private school (Sections 21-28). These schools are often referred to as Model B schools; or,
- To change their status to a state-aided school (Sections 29-40), that is, a school which is partially financed by the government. They are often referred to as Model C schools.

Most schools eventually opted to become Model C schools. The main consequences of this choice were as follows:

- The ownership and control of all movable and immovable property transferred to the governing body of the school (Section 31A.1a). Should such a school decide to change its status again to a public school, then the ownership and control of all property would return to the state (Section 39d);
- All liabilities and obligations previously vested in the state devolved upon the governing body of a school (Section 31A.1b);
- The right to determine salaries, salary scales, allowances, and conditions of service of employees remained vested in the Minister (Section 68a-b); and,
- The governing body assumed full responsibility for the management, the control, and the executive functions of a state-aided school (Section 31A.1d). This proviso enabled state-aided schools, prior to 1993, to accept children of colour as pupils.

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The Education Affairs Act determined that the medium of instruction had to be either Afrikaans or English. Limited parental choice was, however, offered in respect of medium of instruction. The principal of a school ascertained the medium of instruction on the basis of a child's language proficiency (Section 55.1). However, where a child was equally proficient in both official languages, the parent might choose the medium of instruction (Section 55.2).

The law also provided a right of appeal (Section 56) to parents should they feel aggrieved about the principal's choice.

The language choice exercised by the principal in accordance with Section 55.1 remained the medium of instruction at least up to level nine (Std 7; Section 57b). Parents might, however, choose another medium of instruction in respect of levels ten, eleven, and twelve (Section 57.2). Should the parents not exercise this right, the original medium of instruction remains in force (Section 57.2).

An interesting aspect of the Education Affairs Act (Act 70 of 1988) is that the notion of official languages was not defined at all. The 1993 Constitution and its definition of eleven official languages thus create the possibility that the parents of the majority ethnic group, may override the principal's choice of medium of instruction if they so choose.

In an about turn, Section 58c again provided for parallel medium of instruction in *public* schools. Previously, the Consolidated Education Ordinance of 1953 effectively terminated parallel medium schools (Reagan, 1987:136). The reason why this provision had not been legally extended to state-aided schools, was ostensibly because of the built-in mechanisms (Sections 55.2 and 57b) whereby parents might choose a medium of instruction other than the one already designated by the principal, and by doing so, effectively introduced the principle of parallel medium schools.

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## 2.3 Rationale for Adopting the Eleven Official Languages Policy

### 2.3.1 Introduction

A close analysis of the principles underlying the language clauses of the 1993 Constitution appears to indicate twofold rationale for adopting the language clauses in question. They are:

- The rich language diversity in South Africa which necessitates a language policy promoting the principle of multilingualism (Section 3.1, and Section 3.10c). Multilingualism refers to the use of more than one language in a given geographical area (Stewart, 1968:531).
- The need for redress due to imbalances with regard to language caused by past language policies (see also NEPI, 1994:17). Redressing here refers to a need to develop and promote, in particular, the African languages, and the languages of other linguistic minorities. Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.9a, 3.9b, and 3.10a-c appear to be of crucial importance in this respect.

### 2.3.2 Linguistic Diversity in South Africa

Prinsloo (1986:267) identifies twenty four language groups in South Africa based upon the results of the 1980 census. Apart from the two official languages, Afrikaans and English, there are six European languages spoken mainly by immigrants, five Indian languages, Chinese, and ten African languages.<sup>8</sup>

Ascertaining the correct number of speakers of a particular language is not an easy task, because researchers often use outdated figures based upon the 1980 census (for example, Prinsloo, *op. cit.*, and Schuring, 1990), and the different parameters used in their research. Both the studies of Prinsloo (*op. cit.*) and Schuring (*op. cit.*), for instance, only provide statistics concerning South Africa as defined prior to the 1993 Constitution. Their studies, therefore, do not include figures from the TBVC countries. The lack of accurate evidence

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<sup>8</sup> Prinsloo (*op. cit.*:268) distinguishes between Northern Ndebele and Southern Ndebele within isiNdebele.

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about the factual language situation within the TBVC countries, limits the value of Schuring's (op. cit.) statistics on the regional distribution of South African languages within the nine constitutional regions.

**Table 2.3.2a** (cf. p.18), compiled by NEPI (1994:22), provides statistics on the number of speakers of South African languages.

Section 3.4 of the 1993 Constitution empowers regional legislators to implement a policy of language differentiation. This proviso mandates a regional legislator to determine, *inter alia*, the official languages to be used in that region. Section 3.4, of course, is subject to the provisions of Section 3.9a-f. The former is undoubtedly important, because one would expect that it will impact on the choice of languages to be used, for example, as media of instruction in schools.

Accurate data on the number of speakers in the nine constitutional regions are, therefore, of vital importance in the planning of language education policy. Schuring's (op. cit.) data on language distribution within the nine regions are often regarded as the most accurate, but because the TBVC countries were excluded from his survey, distortions are likely to occur in the Northern Cape and Western Transvaal<sup>9</sup> because of the exclusion of Tswana speakers, in the Eastern Cape where large numbers of Xhosa speakers are unaccounted for, and in the Northern Transvaal<sup>10</sup> with regard to Venda speakers (NEPI, op. cit.:21-24).

**Table 2.3.2b** (cf. p.19) surveys the dominant languages, expressed as a percentage of the total population, in each of the nine regions (based upon Schuring, op. cit.).

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<sup>9</sup> Now the Northwest Province.

<sup>10</sup> Now called the Northern Province.

Table 2.3.2a *SA Languages and their Speakers*

Languages	Number of speakers	Percentage of population
Afrikaans	6 188 981	15.66 %
English	3 432 042	8.68 %
<b>Nguni languages</b>		
Ndebele	799 216	2.02 %
Swazi	926 094	2.34 %
Xhosa	6 891 358	17.44 %
Zulu	8 541 173	21.61 %
<b>Sotho Languages</b>		
North Sotho	3 437 971	8.70 %
South Sotho	2 652 590	6.71 %
Tswana	3 601 609	9.11 %
<b>Tsonga</b>		
	1 349 022	3.54 %
<b>Venda</b>		
	763 247	1.93 %
<b>Other Languages</b>		
Dutch	11 740	
German	40 240	
Greek	16 780	
Italian	16 600	
Portuguese	57 080	
French	6 340	
Tamil	24 720	
Hindi	25 900	
Telegu	4 000	
Gujerati	25 120	
Urdu	13 280	
Chinese	2 700	
Other	22 740	

Table 2.3.2b

*Home Languages in the Nine Regions*

REGION LANGUAGE	W. CAPE	N. CAPE	O F S	E. CAPE	NATAL	E. TVL	N. TVL	PWV	W.TVL
Afrikaans	69.6	54.1	15.8	29.6	2.6	12.4	3.4	20.7	21.7
English	19.4	3.5	1.8	11.9	17.7	2.7	0.7	15.1	2.7
Zulu	0.1	0.7	7.0	0.1	75.0	25.5	0.8	15.5	1.9
Xhosa	9.5	8.2	11.6	57.2	2.3	2.9	0.4	7.4	12.2
Swazi	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	29.9	0.9	2.0	0.3
Ndebele	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	6.1	3.5	4.3	0.2
South Sotho	0.2	1.5	55.7	0.8	0.5	3.9	0.4	9.8	7.6
Tswana	0.1	31.3	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.6	2.2	8.6	50.6
North Sotho	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.1	9.5	63.0	8.2	0.8
Tsonga	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	4.9	21.4	3.4	1.0
Venda	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.8	1.5	0.2
Other	1.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	1.6	1.0	0.4	2.8	1.0

	Widely Spoken Languages
	Dominant Home Languages

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### 2.3.3 The Need for Redressing Historical Imbalances

This subsection expounds the second rationale for adopting the language clauses of the interim Constitution of 1993. It is, however, clear that redressing of past imbalances was not merely an actuating force in writing the 1993 Constitution, but has become a principle in itself (cf. 2.4.2), hence the same heading as in 2.4.2 is used here.

The provision of education along racial lines, and the pursuit of the dual official language policy, had a severe influence on a number of educational issues.

Firstly, there is general agreement that African languages need to be developed to reach the same status as Afrikaans and English before they can be properly used, for example, as media of instruction. One aspect of African language development that requires urgent attention is the development of vocabulary for post-primary education (NEPI, 1994:17). But, as the Unesco Conference of Ministers of Education in Africa (1988:19) points out, the prejudices against African languages must be overcome before they can enjoy the same status as Afrikaans and English.

Secondly, the basis upon which education is provided to African children needs urgent revision. Media of instruction policies pursued in African education are, in the author's view, not the only causes for the current crisis,<sup>11</sup> but the racially-based education system, which resulted in unacceptable pupil-staff ratios, different mandatory by-laws regulating the provision of qualified teachers, and the under-resourcing of textbooks, is also partly to blame for the present crisis in African education. Stubbs (1976) confirms this view that language is seldom solely to blame for school failures. Factors at another level are often the actual causes (cf. 5.2.3).

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<sup>11</sup> The NEPI report (op. cit.:32), for example, states that the highest drop-out rate in African education occurs during the first year of schooling when instruction takes place through the mother tongue. The next highest failure rate is in Std 3 when English is used as medium of instruction.

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## 2.4 Principles of the Eleven Official Languages Policy<sup>12</sup>

Six chief principles underlie the language clauses and Bill of Rights of the 1993 Constitution. They are the principle of multilingualism, the need to redress historical imbalances, a policy of regional differentiation, a national and provincial language of record, language planning, and the right to basic education.

### 2.4.1 Eleven Official Languages: The Principle of Multilingualism

The 1993 Constitution recognises eleven languages as *official languages* in South Africa, and thereby firmly establishes the principle of multilingualism. The eleven official languages at national level are:

Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu (Section 3.1; cf. also 1.1).

Of particular importance is the recognition of the above languages as *official* languages. Constitutions and language planners usually differentiate between official and national languages. The Namibian Constitution, therefore, recognises English as the official language, and the other indigenous languages as national languages. An official language is the language in which a state conducts its business, and simultaneously has the function of unifying that state (Tabouret-Keller, 1991:52); a national language, however, refers to the language used by a particular language group within a specific geographical area (Steyn, 1990:40).

Consequently, all citizens 'have the right to use and to be addressed in his or her dealings with any public administration at the national level of government in any official South African language of his or her choice', subject to the proviso of practicability (Section 3.3). Section 3.7 stipulates that members of Parliament may also address Parliament in any official language.

The language clauses of the 1993 Constitution are at pains to avoid any impression that the additive approach followed by the legislators may be interpreted to mean that language

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 5 for a discussion on how these principles could impact on the teaching of language.

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rights, which existed prior to the 1993 Constitution, will be diminished (see Section 3.2, 3.5, and 3.9f). These clauses have, therefore, the effect that the status of Afrikaans and English cannot be altered in any of the nine constitutional regions/provinces.

The Constitution further commits the Government to promote the principle of multilingualism actively with regard to language use, in future legislation, as well as in any official policy and practice (see Section 3.9d).

It is interesting to observe that the Constitution extends the promotion of multilingualism beyond the confines of the eleven official languages mentioned in Section 3.1 to the languages of other linguistic minorities (Section 3.9e and 3.10c). These languages include European languages (German, Greek, and Portuguese), the five Indian languages (Gujerati, Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu), and some languages used for religious purposes (Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and others).

#### **2.4.2 The Need to Redress Historical Imbalances**

The 1993 Constitution seeks to redress historical imbalances with regard to languages in two ways:

- By creating conditions conducive to the development and promotion of all languages for 'their equal use and enjoyment' (Section 3.1). The agency entrusted with the development and promotion of languages is the Pan South African Language Board (Section 3.10a-c).
- By extending, through an Act of Parliament, language rights, which previously existed only at regional level, to national level (Section 3.2 and 3.9b).

Section 8 and its sub-clauses appear to redress, although couched in general terms, some of the imbalances caused by the racially segregated education system (cf. 2.3.3). Section 8.1, for example, establishes the principle of equality of all persons before the law, while Section 8.2 determines that no one shall be unfairly discriminated against on the ground of race, gender, etc. Section 8.3a also provides for affirmative measures to be implemented in order to assist the advancement of historically disadvantaged individuals. In addition to these provi-

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sions, Section 32 guarantees the right of every individual to basic education and equal access to educational facilities.

### **2.4.3 A Policy of Regional Differentiation**

Provincial Legislators are given powers, in terms of the 1993 Constitution, to declare any language mentioned in Section 3.1 as the official language for the whole or part of the province to ensure effective government (Section 3.5).

A Provincial Legislature may only pursue a policy of regional differentiation with regard to language if that policy does not impinge on any language rights, or will lead to the diminution of language rights which existed prior to the 1993 Constitution. Because a Provincial Legislator is constitutionally obliged to honour all language rights protected by the Constitution, an individual has the right to approach any Provincial Legislator in the language of his or her choice (Section 3.6).

The effect of Section 3.5 is that Provincial Legislators are bound to recognise, apart from Afrikaans and English, at least one African language as official languages. This does, however, not diminish their capacity to declare any one language a language of record, that is, a language that will serve as language of wider communication within the Provincial Government<sup>13</sup> (cf. 2.4.4).

### **2.4.4 A National and Provincial Language of Record**

Section 3.8 empowers Parliament and provincial legislators to legislate for the introduction of official languages for the purposes of effective government (cf. also the discussion of Section 3.4 under 2.3.2). What this clause seems to aim at is the introduction of a language of record. Legislation to implement such a language or languages of record must take into account issues such as usage, practicality, and expense.

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<sup>13</sup> The Northern Province, for example, decided in 1995 that its language of record would be English.

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### 2.4.5 Language Planning<sup>14</sup>

Of particular importance to language planners is Section 3.10 which deals with the establishment of the Pan South African Language Board. The establishment of the Pan South African Language Board is the responsibility of Senate.

The reason for transferring responsibility to Senate is an obvious attempt to further entrench language rights given under the 1993 Constitution. Senate, in terms of the Constitution, is composed of ten senators from each province, nominated by all representative parties in a Provincial Legislature (Section 48). Furthermore, according to Section 62.1, the 1993 Constitution can only be amended by a two thirds majority of both the National Assembly and the Senate during a joint sitting. The regional composition of Senate, and the required two thirds majority from both the National Assembly and Senate to amend the Constitution, will make it extremely difficult for any party to change the language clauses.

The Pan South African Language Board has the following duties:

- To foster respect for the principles mentioned in Section 3.9. They include, *inter alia*, the prevention of the use of language to exploit, to dominate, and to divide (Section 3.9c), the promotion of multilingualism (Section 3.9d), and promotion of respect for all South African languages other than the official languages (Section 3.9e);
- To develop all official South African languages (Section 3.10a), and languages of other linguistic minorities as mentioned in Section 3.10c; and,
- To make recommendations regarding any envisaged legislation (see, for example, Section 3.2).

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Chapter 3 for a discussion of language planning issues.

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### 2.4.6 The Right to Basic Education

Section 32 of the Bill of Rights establishes the basic right of each individual

- a to basic education and to equal access to educational institutions;
- b to instruction in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable; and
- c to establish, where practicable, educational institutions based upon a common culture, language or religion, provided that there shall be no discrimination on the ground of race.

The provision of mother tongue instruction<sup>15</sup> as a basic right, and the criteria on which it will be provided, will in future years prove to be one of the thorny issues Provincial Legislators<sup>16</sup> will need to solve. The statistics provided by Schuring (1990, cf. Table 2.3.2b, p.19) have profound implications in this regard. Section 3.2 determines that '(R)ights relating to language and the status of languages existing at the commencement of the Constitution shall not be diminished'. If this Section is read together with Section 32.c, which establishes the right of each individual to mother tongue instruction 'where this is reasonably practicable', then the position of Afrikaans in Kwazulu-Natal and in the Northern Province as a medium of instruction in public schools seems secure, even though it is not widely spoken in these provinces.

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<sup>15</sup> The issues of mother tongue and/or second language instruction in South Africa will be addressed in Chapter 4. It appears that recent interpretations of the provisos of Section 32(c), that no pupil will be barred from a school based upon race, and Section 8(2), barring discrimination on any grounds, enjoy preference above the provision of mother tongue instruction in Section 32(b). If this interpretation is correct, then monolingual schools, that is schools offering instruction in only one language is unconstitutionally (cf. du Toit in *Rapport* of 24 September 1995).

<sup>16</sup> Section 126 determines that Provincial Legislators have 'concurrent competence with Parliament' to legislate for all matters specified in Schedule 6 of the Constitution. Among these concurrent powers is the capacity to make laws regarding '(E)ducation at all levels, excluding university and technicon education'.

The same holds for English in the Northern Cape, Orange Free State, Eastern Transvaal, Northern Province, and Northwest Province, in which it is a minority language.<sup>17</sup>

What these criteria will be, are not spelt out by the Constitution, although one would expect that the Provincial Legislators will let themselves be guided by the general provisions of Section 3.

The distribution of languages in the Northern Province (cf. Table 2.3.2b, p.19) shows how complicated the process of determining criteria could be. Should the speakers of isiZulu (0.8%), siSwati (0.9%), isiNdebele (3.5%), Setswana (2.2%), Sesotho sa Leboa (63%), Xitsonga (21.4%), and Tshivenda (2.8%)<sup>18</sup> demand mother tongue instruction, then they could hardly be denied because their numbers are greater than those of English (0.7%). Present language ideology among Africans favours English as medium of instruction (Reagan, 1985; Reagan, 1986a; Reagan, 1986b; Reagan, 1987; Reagan and Ntshoe, 1987), but as Reagan (1987:1; 1990:182) points out, education language policies in Africa have tended to support vernacularisation.<sup>19</sup> The latter, according to Reagan (1990:182)

entails the selection and use of an indigenous language, rather than a former colonial language (or any LWC, for that matter, as the official national language of a country, and the use of this language in education.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Haberland (1991) for the attendant problems in deciding when a language can be considered a minority language.

<sup>18</sup> The number of Tshivenda speakers in the Northern Province is distorted because Schuring (op. cit.) excluded the TBVC countries from his survey.

<sup>19</sup> Reagan (1990:182), however, contends that in South Africa, given its history of intergroup ethnic tensions, unlike as in Tanzania, there seems to be little support for a general policy of vernacularisation. This does not mean, however, that Africans will not demand mother tongue instruction. Reagan (1987:4), for example, contends that "(W)hile 'Bantu education' was clearly despised, many blacks viewed the use of indigenous African languages in education as desirable'.

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## 2.5 Dealing with Language Rights: a Bill of Rights and Language Charters

Language rights are commonly enshrined constitutionally, especially in a Bill of Rights, or within a Language Charter. The differences between these two approaches will be briefly discussed under 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.

The Bill of Fundamental Rights (Chapter 3 of the the 1993 Constitution) recognises only the following rights pertaining to language:

- The right of any detainee or sentenced prisoner to be informed about the reason of his/her detention in his/her language (Section 25.1a);
- The right of every individual to use his/her own language and to participate in the cultural life of his/her own choice (Section 31); and,
- The right of each person to basic education and mother tongue instruction 'where this is reasonably practicable' (Section 32).

The language clauses (Section 3) are mentioned under the formal provisions of Chapter 1. It is unclear what the legal implications are of this approach to language issues in the 1993 Constitution.

### 2.5.1 Language Rights in a Bill of Rights

Scholars are in general reluctant to define what language rights are (Suid-Afrikaanse Regskommissie, 1989:396; Steyn, 1990:39). Zuanelli (1991:297) maintains that language rights concern 'the rights of individuals and communities to use their language for certain purposes and in certain circumstances'.

Traditionally, the debate about language rights - as is evident in Zuanelli's definition (*ibid.*; cf. above) - differentiates between individual language rights and communal language rights (Steyn, *op. cit.*:40; Coulombe, 1993:141). Both Steyn (*op. cit.*:40) and Coulombe (*op. cit.*:141-142), however, define individual and communal language rights differently: the former interprets individual language rights as referring to those rights the individual possesses to

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use his language; communal rights then designate those rights a group has to establish its own institutions, and the promotion of a group's language and culture. The latter, by contrast, limits individual language rights to the right of non-discrimination and non-interference based upon one's language; communal language rights, however, refer to rights with respect to language use. The definitions of Coulombe (ibid.) are superior to those of Steyn (ibid.) when one considers the strong bond between language use and one's identity. Language is often an expression of who one is, who one thinks one is, and how one relates to one's community (Coulombe, op. cit.:141).

Both individual and community language rights are enshrined in the 1993 Constitution. Section 8.2, for example, protects an individual against discrimination based upon 'race, gender, sex, ethnic, or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or *language*' (emphasis added; individual language rights). In similar vein, Sections 3.3, 3.6, and 3.7 acknowledge the right of persons to address government institutions (national and provincial), and parliament in the language of their choice (communal language rights) as already mentioned in 2.4.3.

Section 3.4, which allows provincial legislators to determine their own language policy, is an example where communal language rights are assigned on a territorial basis. Another well-known example of where a territorial principle is applied to language rights is Switzerland. The Swiss Federal Constitution recognises four national languages, namely French, German, Italian, and Romansch. Only German, French and Italian are, however, regarded as official languages (Bourhis, 1984b:14). Article 116 of the Swiss Federal Constitution grants cantons the right to decide on language policy regarding the use of language in schools, law courts, and public administration (Watts, 1991:84-85). This provision of the Swiss Constitution often determines that cantons are monolingual areas.<sup>20</sup> A person speaking a language other than the official language of a canton has, therefore few language rights.

Language disputes in Switzerland are also settled by applying the territorial principle. In 1974 Switzerland voted in a country-wide referendum to establish a new French unilingual

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<sup>20</sup> Some cantons are indeed bilingual for the purposes of cantonal administration. But this does not deter individual communes within a canton to have their own language arrangements with regard to local public institutions (Watts, op. cit.:85).

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canton, namely *le Canton du Jura*, because French-speaking residents had grown frustrated because of their minority position within the German-speaking Canton of Bern (Bourhis, op. cit.:15).

Language rights based on a territorial principle are also fraught with educational problems. Consider again an example from Switzerland: a canton or commune provides instruction only in the official language of that canton or commune, although all official languages are taught as second languages in the school system (Bourhis, *ibid.*). Children whose mother tongue is different from the official language of the canton or commune in which they reside, have to commute between cantons or communes to receive instruction in their own language at the expense of their own canton or commune (Watts, op. cit.:85-86).

The Swiss experience with language rights linked to a territorial principle should give language planners in South Africa an idea of how difficult it will be to reconcile Section 32, which provides for mother tongue instruction where practicable, with the proviso of Section 3.4 (cf. the discussion under 2.4.6).

Coulombe (op. cit.:146) also distinguishes between the right to *sustain* one's language and to *live* in one's language. The former requires active state intervention to promote and develop a person's language (see Section 10 dealing with the Pan South African Language Board), while the latter refers to one's right to be understood, both in private and public situations (cf. Sections 3.3, 3.6 and 3.7).

Reference was made earlier to Section 3.8 which empowers Parliament and provincial legislators to name any of the eleven official languages an official language (or, a language of record) for the purposes of effective government. It remains a question whether government actions such as this do not interfere with the rights of other language to become *lived* languages (cf. Coulombe, op. cit.:146).

Constitutionally enshrined language rights unfortunately often introduce an element of competition between languages, as is evident from the discussion above. The major problem constitutions struggle with is how to minimise this potential for conflict. Ironically, the problem of language conflict is often not a purely linguistic one, but as Watts (op. cit.:94) points out, one of ethnolinguistics. Communities react to perceived discrimination, not because they

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consider their language to be threatened, but because they themselves as a community feel threatened. Language becomes only a convenient hook on which to hang perceived discrimination.

### 2.5.2 Language Rights in Language Charters

Linguistic rights may also be protected in Charters. Examples of Charters are the *Charter on Regional or Minority Languages* (or RML) of the Council of Europe,<sup>21</sup> the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), and the *Charter of the French Language* (Bill 101 of 1977).

It is important to observe that the RML mainly aims to protect regional and minority languages. Protection here includes both the issues of non-discrimination and promotion. Because non-discrimination is defined on the basis of equality between speakers and not languages, measures taken by member states to promote an official language and/or national languages cannot be construed as discrimination against speakers of RMLs (Tabouret-Keller, op. cit.:49).

Although the RML is a legal instrument, the way in which it is formulated may prevent it from being enforced. The RML distinguishes between general principles and adopted measures, which will be legally implemented by the member states. It is precisely this distinction that enables member states to manipulate the Charter in ways to suit their own interests. For example, the Charter, on the one hand, calls upon member states to identify the regional and minority languages present in their territory to which the Charter shall apply. But, on the other hand, the member states are also free to choose the provision which they wish to endorse for each of the languages present in their territory. Therefore, ultimately, the application of the Charter will depend largely on the motivation of the speakers of RMLs to have the Charter enforced (Tabouret-Keller, op. cit.:50).

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<sup>21</sup> The Council of Europe consists of all the member states of the European Economic Community (EEC), and Austria, Cyprus, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey (Tabouret-Keller, 1991:47).

The chief aim of the language clauses (clauses 16-23) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is to establish English and French as the official languages of Canada (clauses 16-22). Clause 23 deals with rights pertaining to minority language education. Significantly, these rights are only extended to Canadian citizens (Mallea, 1984).

Two provisions of clause 23, 23.1a and 23.2 (the so-called 'Canada' clause), do not apply in the Province of Quebec, because Quebec still has to sign the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* into law (Mallea, op. cit.:224). Both these clauses grant, as a constitutional right, mother tongue instruction in either English or French. The chances that these provisions will legally take effect in Quebec are slim as they contradict clause 72 of the *Charter of the French Language* (Bill 101 of 1977) currently in force in the Province of Quebec (Mallea, op. cit.:244).

A particular controversial aspect of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* is the basis upon which access is granted to instruction in either English or French. Clause 23.3b determines that instruction may take place in either English or French 'where the number of those children so warrant'.<sup>22</sup> The effect of this clause is that instruction in French to francophones varies from province to province, and is conditional to the numbers of francophones residing in that area (Mallea, op. cit.:245).

The *Charter of the French Language* (Bill 101 of 1977) was enacted on 26 August 1977 by the Parti Québécois.<sup>23</sup>

Bill 101 is an example of Government intervention in the field of language status; planning to promote and preserve the French language and French culture in Quebec. It recognises four fundamental linguistic rights, of which the first three are mentioned in Chapter II, and the fourth in Chapter VIII (d'Anglejan, 1984:40):

- The right of every person to have the civil administration, semi-public agencies, and business firms communicate with him/her in French;

<sup>22</sup> Clause 23 is reprinted completely in Mallea (op. cit.).

<sup>23</sup> Bill 101 is reprinted as Appendix 1 in Bourhis (1984a).

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- The right of workers to do their work in French;
  - The right of consumers to receive information in French; and,
  - The right of children to receive instruction in French.

Mallea (op. cit.:236) contends that the *Charter of the French Language* has three educational goals: firstly, it aims to enforce French as the primary language in schools; secondly, it places restrictions on admission to English schools, and sets growth limits for the English language education system; and, thirdly, it requires children of allophones to enrol at French schools.

Opponents of Bill 101 are particular distraught by the lack of provision for other minority languages, not to mention the lack even of reference to other languages, in the Bill. Bill 101's passing references to 'languages other than French', without even mentioning English, indeed seem to solidify the impression that the legislators do not subscribe to Canada's policy of bilingualism, and that it views communication with the rest of Canada as of no importance (d'Anglejan, op. cit.:42-43). Clause 73 contains the only reference to the English language, and then only by establishing exceptions when instruction in English may be permitted (cf. Mallea, op. cit.:235-236). Laporte (cited by d'Anglejan, op. cit.:43) gives a succinct evaluation of Bill 101: 'the phrasing of the legislation and its many dispositions about the new status of French and of Quebec, gives it a completely new political significance: Bill 101 is more than a language legislation; it is an attempt by the new government to move political consciousness away from its previous content to a Québécois content. Language legislation in Quebec, as it is in many 'new nations' of Africa and Asia, is now a nation-building mechanism'.

Brumfit (1989 and 1995) develops and extends the concept of a Charter for Languages into a tool to formulate language policy for education. The most unusual characteristic of his Charter is that it addresses the needs of all language learners irrespective of their 'linguistic knowledge and capacities they brought to their schooling' (Brumfit, 1995:12). The motivation for such a Charter is twofold: firstly, it expresses what is desirable in language education, and secondly, it requires a personal commitment from the parties involved to realise the set goals (ibid.).

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The aims of the Charter are (Brumfit, 1995:13):

- To benefit all individuals entitled to education equally. English speakers are therefore not advantaged to the detriment of speakers of other languages;
- To reflect current research on language acquisition and education;
- To realise the principles of the Charter for every learner; and,
- To respond to the needs of British-educated learners.

The Charter can be described as consisting of four concentric circles with the outer circle surrounding and containing the inner ones. The innermost circle determines that a person begins his/her language education with his/her own mother tongue, or dialect thereof. Furthermore, the Charter also provides for the maximum development of a person's mother tongue so that he/she may use it effectively and confidently. The second circle aims to equip a person with a competence in a whole range of English styles appropriate for educational, work-based, social and public-life purposes. The third circle attempts to develop an understanding of how languages operate in multilingual situations, and to expose the learner to other languages that are significant in the local community or educational sphere. The last and fourth circle aims to develop a practical competence in at least one other language.

Charters for languages seem to have one common characteristic, namely to seek common agreement as to what linguistic rights should be protected. The *Charter on Regional and Minority Languages* seeks to protect the linguistic rights of RMLs, but then leaves it largely to member states how to protect those rights. The same holds for the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*: it establishes English and French as official languages of Canada, and offers mother tongue instruction to speakers of these languages. Yet these provisions can only be enacted once the provincial assemblies choose to become signatories of the Charter. A personal commitment to realise the ideals of the Charter for Languages, is also central to the success of the concept (Brumfit, 1995:12).

The *Charter of the French Language* is strictly speaking no charter at all, but merely an important bill. The legislators of Quebec obviously call it a charter, because they want to place it on the same footing as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This is what Camille Laurin, Minister of State for Cultural Development, and main architect of Bill 101, may have had in mind when he gave notice to introduce the bill: 'The Government of Quebec

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has decided to treat the bill on the French language as a priority among the bills to be tabled in the National Assembly. By giving this law the status of a charter, the government seeks to emphasize the special importance and the eminence of the language to which basic rights will now be granted' (cited by Mallea, op. cit.:235).

The charter, because it is a consensus seeking instrument aiming to reduce the potential for conflict, is, therefore, *par excellence* suited to federal or confederal contexts as the examples from the Council of Europe and Canada aptly illustrate.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Language in education policies prior to 1993 clearly centred around attempts by politicians to introduce the mother tongue principle and the goal of official bilingualism as tools to preserve and extend the influence of the Afrikaans language. A major consequence of this divisive policy has been that, ironically, the principle of mother tongue instruction has become politically suspect to the extent that many Africans believe that the proponents of this principle use it as a means to keep them in subservience. Another, equally important, consequence has been the resultant devaluation of the African languages by their own speakers. It will undoubtedly take many years to undo the harm caused by this policy.

In an obvious attempt to undo the language policies of the past the interim Constitution of 1993 recognises eleven languages as *official* and accord equal rights to all. Section 32 has special importance as far as languages in education are concerned because it guarantees instruction in the mother tongue of the child where it is feasible. The most important implication of the 1993 Constitution, however, is the foundation it has laid for the pursuance of an official policy of multilingualism.

In an effort to provide a mechanism whereby all languages can be developed for equal enjoyment, the Constitution elevates language planning to a constitutional obligation of the Pan South African Language Board.

The way the Republic of South Africa has chosen to deal with language rights, namely through a Bill of Rights, is in itself significant. Guaranteeing language rights through a Bill of Rights has, unfortunately, one serious disadvantage, namely that it introduces competition

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between languages. South Africa might have eventually benefited more were language rights protected through a Charter of Languages which is a consensus seeking instrument.

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims primarily to investigate the state and extent of language planning done in South Africa for the different languages, namely the African languages, Afrikaans, and English. The enactment of the 1993 Constitution has become a watershed event in the history of language planning - not so much because of the work done since 1993, but because of the change of direction instituted by the Constitution. Consequently, language planning will be discussed here from two perspectives: language planning before and after 1993.

The promotion of multilingualism appears to be the central concern of language planning after 1993. In order to contextualise language planning endeavours in multilingual societies, reference will briefly be made to language planning efforts in two such societies, namely Canada and Tanzania.

Language planning, as will be argued in 3.2, naturally has various aims. Two of these must be mentioned: firstly, language planning is often done to decide on the official and national languages of a country or a region. Because the 1993 Constitution has already determined the official languages of South Africa, the ensuing discussion does not address this issue. However, the Constitution of 1993 does allow for regional linguistic differentiation, and the discussion will, therefore, attempt to lay down general principles which may be applied when determining regional languages. Secondly, language planning also has educational implications, especially where media of instruction policies are concerned. This chapter does not aim to provide answers to such vexing problems as which language(s) should be used as medium or media of instruction, or how policies relating to media of instruction should be formulated. These questions will be addressed in the next chapter. Rather, the aim is to determine whether the extent of language planning for the different languages is sufficient for them to be used as media of instruction in schools (cf. the first aim mentioned under 1.2).

### 3.2 Principles of Language Planning

Alexander (1989:63) succinctly defines language planning as 'a deliberate and systematic attempt to change a language itself or to change the function of a language in a par-

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ticular society'. Bourhis (1984b:3) cautions that intervention in language planning must always be geared towards solving 'real and concrete communication problems within the society'.

Language planning programmes are often associated with the attainment of four goals, namely language purification, language reform, language revival, and language standardisation (Bourhis, *op. cit.*:3-16).

Language purification programmes are usually concerned with the selection of an appropriate style. Language reform pertains to moves to simplify or modernise a language in order to make it more adaptable to modern communicative needs. Language revival involves efforts to restore old ancestral languages to their former status. Bourhis (*op. cit.*:10) considers language standardisation as 'the backbone of language planning activity'. In essence, language standardisation entails the selection of a language or dialect to become the preferred language of a region or state.<sup>1</sup>

Two areas are usually distinguished within language planning, namely corpus language planning and status language planning. The former refers to decisions about language with respect to orthography, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. The latter concerns the functional role a language may be called upon to fulfil within the state administration, and within the regions of a state (Bourhis, *op. cit.*:3).

Language planners usually utilise three kinds of data sets, namely data on language attitudes, data on the numerical strength of speakers, and data on the status and level of development of particular languages (Cluver (1992:112).

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<sup>1</sup> See Holmes (1992:112-117) for the language planning process that should precede the declaration of any official language. An official language, according to Holmes (*op. cit.*:116), should have the following characteristics: it must be able to *unify* a nation; it must possess a certain *prestigious value*; and it must *separate* the nation linguistically from other countries.

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### 3.3 Language Planning in Multilingual Settings

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

The language planning endeavours of Canada and Tanzania will now briefly be discussed. The choice of these countries is deliberate. Canada has been chosen because it may offer invaluable perspectives on how multilingual issues are handled in one of the West's main immigration countries. Tanzania, by contrast, is often presented as an example, from Africa, of how multilingual questions can successfully be addressed.

#### 3.3.2 Canada

Canada, according to a 1992 estimate, has a population of 27 737 000 people, of whom sixty-two percent have English as their first language, twenty-five percent are French-speaking, and ten percent are bilingual (Guinness, 1993:547). After World War II fundamental changes in the nation's ethnic composition occurred due to massive immigration. Mallea (1984:226) reports, for example, that the number of people classified as 'other', that is, people not considered of British, French or native stock, rose from 7,7% in 1871 to 25,3% of the population in 1971.

The language debate in Canada is largely a question of how to marry the principle of historic federalism with that of sovereignty association (Mallea, op. cit.:256). Canada was founded as a federal state in 1867 with the enactment of the British North America Act. This stipulated that Canada would consist of four provinces, namely Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and New Brunswick.<sup>2</sup> Article 113 declared English and French the official languages in Federal laws and in the Federal Assembly. Questions pertaining to languages in education were devolved upon the provinces (Mallea, op. cit.:222). In 1982 the *Canadian Constitution* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* were passed in the Federal Assembly. Sections 16-22 declared English and French the official languages of Canada irrespective of the language arrangements that the provinces might have agreed upon. In the main, only New Bruns-

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<sup>2</sup> The number of provinces rose to thirteen in the course of history. They are Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon Territory (Guinness, op. cit.:547-548).

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wick and the Federal Government have implemented these resolutions. Ontario and Quebec<sup>3</sup> refused implementation (Mallea, op. cit.:243).

From the 1870s<sup>4</sup> until the 1950s the trend in the English-speaking provinces was to deny French-speaking minorities a special dispensation in the school system, because language in educational matters was considered predominantly from the perspective of the provincial language majority (Hobart, 1977:373).

In 1963 the federal government established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to combat the growing alienation of Quebec from mainstream Canada (Mallea, op. cit.:229). Through the Commission the federal government aimed to entrench multiculturalism, but not multilingualism, in the cultural life of Canada (Hobart, op. cit.:386). The establishment of the Commission had some positive effects on language planning in Canada. They were:

- The enactment of the Official Languages Act of 1969 which led to the implementation of a bilingualisation process in the federal civil service and the provision of bilingual language services by the federal government (Hobart, *ibid.*).
- A liberalisation of policies with regard to minority languages in education which occurred in Ontario, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. The imposition of new language policies has led to equal language rights in education

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. 2.5.2 for the reasons for Quebec's refusal.

<sup>4</sup> The school system in Canada was traditionally organised on a confessional basis, because most francophones have commonly been Roman Catholics and anglophones Protestants (Hobart, 1977:373). The enactment in 1871 of the New Brunswick Common Schools Act had the effect of obliterating the confessional basis of the schools by turning private Catholic schools into public schools. This was done by levying a property tax which even parents who sent their children to private Catholic schools had to pay, and by stipulating that all state-funded schools should be denominational (Hobart, *ibid.*). Although the law did not discuss language of instruction policies, its enactment certainly eroded French language rights in the province (Mallea, op. cit.:229). The New Brunswick school episode led to similar events in Prince Edward Island (1877), in Manitoba (1980), and in 1912 in Ontario (Hobart, op. cit.:374-377).

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(New Brunswick, 1969), the removal of any restriction on French as a language of instruction (Manitoba, 1970), the concession to school boards to provide French schools and classes (Alberta), and in 1978 the sanctioning of instruction in French in Saskatchewan where numbers warranted it (Mallea, op. cit.:230).

The liberalisation of language policies in education has not been limited to French only. Instruction in the native Indian languages has been given in Ontario<sup>5</sup> and Manitoba<sup>6</sup> in spite of legislation which determines that instruction must be in either of the official languages (Hobart, op. cit.:392-393). In Alberta, for example, Ukrainian has been used as a language of instruction since 1974 in an experimental programme (Hobart, op. cit.:393).

The general trend in Canada is, therefore, that language issues rest with the provinces, and that the language situation may differ substantially from province to province. The same applies to the control of education, which is vested in the hands of public authorities within the provinces, controlling curricula and academic standards.

This language situation applies to all Canadian provinces except Quebec. The main difference between Quebec and the other provinces is the basis upon which education is provided. Here it is still based upon confessional differences.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, two almost autonomous systems have developed in Quebec, one for French-speaking Roman Catholics and another for English-speaking Protestants, each setting its own curricula, examinations, and procedures for certifying teachers (Hobart, op. cit.:371). An important result of this partitioning of the system is that English-speaking children have received better treatment in Quebec, even after the enactment of Bill 101, than francophones in the rest of Canada, particularly those in

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<sup>5</sup> Apparently this takes place only in the Indian reserves and not in the provincial schools of northern Ontario. Instruction in Cree and Ojibway is given throughout the primary years (Hobart, op. cit.:392).

<sup>6</sup> Instruction in Cree and Soto is given from kindergarten through grade 3. It forms part of a Native Bilingual programme in operation at five federal schools and one provincial school (Hobart, op. cit.:393).

<sup>7</sup> This was, at least, the case up to 1982. Mallea (op. cit.:249) mentions that the *Parti Québécois* gave notice in 1982 of its intention to abolish separate school boards for Catholics and Protestants.

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Alberta and British Columbia (Mallea, op. cit.:238). Hobart (op. cit.:372) emphasises the language tolerance evident in the school system: the right of anglophone Catholics to instruction in their language has never been disputed. Anglophone Catholics are either accommodated in separate classes within French schools, or, where they are in the majority, in separate English schools.

In 1977 the *Parti Québécois* enacted Bill 101 (*Charter of the French Language*),<sup>8</sup> partly because of increasing evidence showing linguistic transfers from French and other languages to English (Mallea, op. cit.:233), and partly because of a cultural revival in Quebec inspired by the 'Quiet Revolution' of the 1960s.

The Québec approach in Bill 101 to language educational policies also differs, however, in another important respect from the approaches of the English-speaking provinces. Both Saskatchewan and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) base access to mother tongue instruction on the principle of 'where numbers warrant'. Bill 101, however, bases access on the principle of 'any eligible child' (Mallea, op. cit.:245).

Mallea (ibid.) cites evidence that some commentators are arguing for the principle of 'any eligible child' to be applied throughout Canada. This debate may soon gain momentum in South Africa, because the 1993 Constitution's proviso governing mother tongue instruction is similar to that of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982).

### 3.3.3 Tanzania

The 1991 census estimated the population of Tanzania at 25 096 000 people (Guinness, 1993:655). Although both English and Kiswahili are recognised as official languages, major disparities exist with respect of the kind of language proficiency people have in these languages. According to Rubagumya (1986:285), ninety percent (90%) of Tanzanians are bilingual in Kiswahili and another African vernacular; those having Kiswahili as a mother tongue, however, number only ten percent (10%). By contrast, only fifteen percent (15%) claim to have *any* knowledge of English.

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<sup>8</sup> The salient characteristics and aims of Bill 101 were discussed in 2.5.2, and, thus, need not be repeated.

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Kiswahili is thus deeply entrenched in the fabric of Tanzanian society. It is no surprise, therefore, that Kiswahili, and not English, is the working language of many people. Even in cases where English still functions as the working language, Kiswahili is quickly replacing it (Rubagumya, op. cit.:292; Russell, 1990:364).

In 1967 the Tanzanian authorities decided to make Kiswahili the medium of instruction throughout the primary school system.<sup>9</sup> But though the 1982 Presidential Commission on Education suggested that all instruction in secondary schools be given in Kiswahili as from January 1985, nothing came of it. In fact, in an apparent change of direction, the 1984 Presidential Commission on Education simply stated, in the English version,<sup>10</sup> that English would be the 'medium of education at post-primary levels' (Russell, op. cit.:370). The reason for this reversal in policy is ostensibly the fear that the Kiswahili-isation of secondary and tertiary education would adversely affect the teaching of English (Rubagumya, op. cit.:299 endnote 1). At the heart of the matter, however, lies the African perception that English is indispensable for the educational welfare and economic progress of the State and its people (Rubagumya, op. cit.:284-285).

Rubagumya (op. cit.:289-293) favours Kiswahili as medium of instruction for three reasons:

- Research indicates that the English language proficiency of most secondary school pupils, and of many teachers, is fairly low;
- The learning of a language coupled with the learning of subject matter leads to an over-loading of the curriculum; and,
- English instruction adversely affects teaching methodology, which, in turn, has a deleterious effect on the learning process.

The implementation of Kiswahili as medium of instruction is, however, not without its difficulties. Rubagumya (op. cit.:293-294) identifies, *inter alia*, two important problem areas:

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<sup>9</sup> English as a subject is taught only from the third year of primary school (Rubagumya, op. cit.:296).

<sup>10</sup> The Kiswahili version is obviously at odds with the English version when it states that '(B)oth English and Kiswahili will be used as media of education' (cited by Russell, op. cit.:370).

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firstly, the supply of textbooks in Kiswahili is limited, and the costs of producing them are prohibitively high; secondly, the technical vocabulary of Kiswahili is still fairly restricted. Msanjila (1990:311) observes that students at teacher training colleges find it difficult to express themselves satisfactorily in an appropriate Kiswahili academic register.

### **3.3.4 Language Planning in Multilingual South Africa**

An analysis of language planning in South Africa reveals two distinct phases. The first, the era before the enactment of the interim Constitution of 1993, was characterised by an ethnolinguistic approach to language planning, that is, language planning was done separately for each individual language.

Planning during this phase concerned both corpus and status. Planning in the educational sphere, as was shown in 2.2, was mainly concerned with the issue of medium of instruction.

The second phase, introduced by the 1993 Constitution, will produce a new drive and direction in language planning issues. The promotion of multilingualism requires a new, coordinated and inclusive approach. Language rights issues can also be expected to enter the debate. The issue of medium of instruction will certainly occupy a prominent place (Young, 1987:4), but will be debated in future from the perspective of a person's fundamental right to mother tongue instruction.

#### **3.3.4.1 Language Planning Prior to 1993**

##### **3.3.4.1.1 African Languages**

The earliest examples of language planning were the attempts of the missionaries in the late 1800s to develop orthographies to facilitate the translation of the Bible and hymnologies into the local vernaculars (Kloss, 1978:20; cf. also Kgagara, 1993:2-9 on the work done by the Berlin Missionary Society in respect of the orthography of Northern Sotho). The missionaries were also instrumental in authoring the first grammars and dictionaries in the African languages (Kloss, *ibid.*).

The missionaries, however, seldom considered existing political structures in deciding which orthography to codify. Often they codified the orthography of the first linguistic group with which they came into contact. As a result, power structures in African communities were fragmented, especially where different missionary societies were active within the same linguistic group (Cluver, 1992:108). Some scholars even contend that this approach might have led, for example in the cases of Xitsonga, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Setswana, to the description of separate languages in South Africa (Harries, 1988; Alexander, 1989:22-25; Senate Subcommittee on Languages, 1995:9).

With the arrival of the Bantu Education Act (Act No. 47 of 1953), responsibility for the maintenance of African orthographies was transferred to the Central Bantu Language Board of the Department of Bantu Education (Kgagara, op. cit.:10). In 1977 the Department of Bantu Education decided that, because the vernaculars were autonomous languages in their own right, independent Language Boards should be established for each one (cf. letter of Department of Bantu Education in Kgagara, op. cit.:55-57). The Revised Constitution of 1987 of the Northern Sotho Language Board (Kgagara, op. cit.:62-69) makes it clear that these Language Boards received wide-ranging powers as far as language planning was concerned.<sup>11</sup>

Corpus language planning, especially lexicon development, has been done by various institutions, notably the SABC, the South African Language Service, the Department of Justice, and the Bible Society of South Africa, in the form of the publication of trilingual (Afrikaans, English, and Northern Sotho) vocabulary lists (Reagan, 1985:79; for some of these lists cf. Kgagara, op. cit.:75-93).

Despite these attempts at developing vocabulary for the African languages, a need still exists for lexicon innovation (Reagan, 1986b:6). Gugushe (1978:217) reports, for example, that the teaching of African languages at secondary school is frequently characterised by an

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<sup>11</sup> The overarching duty of the Language Boards was the development of the African vernaculars, literature, and culture. This included, *inter alia*, the development of terminological and technical language, establishing rules for orthography and spelling, the selection of appropriate textbooks for school use, the encouragement of research into language and literature, and the promotion of translations into the African languages (Kgagara, op. cit.:66-67).

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extensive borrowing of Afrikaans and English terminology. Subsequently, African languages are rarely used as media of instruction in secondary schools (Senate Subcommittee on Languages, *op. cit.*:11).

Wilkes (1978) offers an excellent outline of the current state of corpus language planning (grammar, dialect and classification studies) in the Bantu languages of South Africa. The breadth of his research appears to substantiate Kloss' (*op. cit.*:21) contention that

(I)n South Africa, more qualified scholars, White and Black, are working on this 'linguistic engineering' than in the rest of Africa. Even Swahili is well behind the South African languages in educational development, in spite of its easy lead in political status (it is now official in three states).

In spite of Wilkes' (*op. cit.*:108-110) optimistic account of the present state of research, he mentions syntax, semantics, phonology, dialect studies, dialect geography, and sociolinguistic studies as areas which warrant further research.

The relative paucity of research he has identified in the field of dialect studies needs closer inspection, because it has a bearing on this study. Firstly, Wilkes (*op. cit.*:106-107) mentions that Bantu linguists have not yet reached consensus on the principles involved in classifying the various dialects, resulting therefore in a poor understanding of the dynamic relationships between dialects. Secondly, a dearth of knowledge exists as far as the Bantu dialects are concerned. Of particular concern is the indication that more than fifty percent of the Sotho and Nguni dialects have not been described at all (Wilkes, *op. cit.*:109).

As will be argued in Chapter 5, this lack of research data on Bantu dialects will have a detrimental effect on educational authorities' ability to determine the exact language content of the African vernaculars, and on efforts to implement successfully the principle of multilingualism in the classroom.

The above account of language planning in African vernaculars refers to what Heugh (1987) has termed 'collaborist contributions', that is, contributions from individuals and institutions working in tandem with the apartheid regime. Heugh (*op. cit.*), Alexander (1989), and Cluver (*op. cit.*) all provide illuminating accounts of the contributions made to language planning by the liberation movements.

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It should be observed, however, that their contributions did not always form part of a coherent language strategy, but were tentative (Heugh, op. cit.:213), and often a response to language planning done by the previous government.<sup>12</sup>

Language planning by the liberation movements revolved around three issues: the possible unification and standardisation of the Sotho and Nguni languages, the equality of all South African languages, and the need for language planning as an exercise in nation-building.

These matters were raised by Jacob Nhlapo in 1944 and 1953 with the publication of two articles respectively entitled *Bantu babel: Will the Bantu languages live* and *The problem of many tongues* (cited by Alexander, 1989:32-35). Nhlapo's position is simple: English should be promoted as a *lingua franca* while the varieties of Sotho and Nguni should be standardised in order to establish two written forms, Sotho and Nguni, as a first step towards a standardised African language.

Doyle (1953, cited by Alexander, 1989:34, and Cluver, op. cit.:108), a member of the Communist Party of South Africa, rejected Nhlapo's proposals as idealistic and elitist, and promoted the idea that the indigenous African languages should attain the same status as Afrikaans and English. The ANC's *Freedom Charter* clearly favours the notion of equal status for all South African languages. It says:

All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs (Congress of the People, 1955).

The same position is retained in the ANC's language policy guidelines of 1992. Article N3.1 thus states:

South Africa is a multilingual society with a large number of languages. ANC policy will recognise, protect and develop all languages and ensure that all citizens

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander (1989:29), for example, mentions that many Africans, realising the intensity of the Afrikaner's struggle against Britain, simply chose English as their language, because, in their view, the choice was between "liberty" as against enslavement'.

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will have equal access to all spheres of the nation's life (African National Congress Policy Guidelines, May 1992, reprinted in NEPI, 1994 as Appendix 2).

Article J4.1 defines ANC policy on language policy for education:

We recognise the multilingual nature of South Africa and believe that all individuals must have access through their mother tongue and a language of wider communication to all avenues of social, political, economic and educational life (African National Congress Policy Guidelines, May 1992, reprinted in NEPI, op. cit., as Appendix 2).

What this 'language of wider communication' is, however, is not spelt out.

The ANC aims to overcome the problems of a multilingual society by designating a language of 'record' to be used at national or regional level. All South African languages should be equally available for this purpose (Article N3.2, African National Congress Policy Guidelines, May 1992, reprinted in NEPI, op. cit. as Appendix 2).

Alexander (1989), a member of the National Language Project,<sup>13</sup> views nation-building as the main aim of language planning in South Africa. He (op. cit.:53-56) consequently proposes that:

- English be promoted as the *lingua franca* to link the different language groups. This must only be seen as temporary measure, that is, until a standardised African vernacular has been developed, which will then assume the role of a *lingua franca*; and,

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<sup>13</sup> The National Language Project superseded the National English Language Project in 1987. The name change coincided with a shift in focus. Whereas the National English Language Project promoted access to English, the National Language Project promotes all indigenous languages (Heugh, op. cit.:215-216).

The National Language Project has adopted the following principles: firstly, that all languages have an equal right to exist and to flourish; secondly, that nation-building should be pursued as its main aim; and, thirdly, that the idea of multilingualism should be encouraged. The minimum aim should be the home language plus English (Alexander, 1989:52-53).

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- The learning of languages other than English be encouraged. A person should, ideally, have a knowledge of his/her home language, the *lingua franca*, and another South African language.

Alexander (op. cit.:54) foresees two possible national language scenarios: the first, and most likely, accepts English as an official language together with other languages which may enjoy official status on a regional level; the second recognises English, Nguni and Sotho as official languages with Afrikaans and other languages having a regional function.

Alexander (op. cit.:65-67) further proposes that mother tongue instruction be provided for the first four or five years. The next few years should then see a gradual transfer to English as medium of instruction, while the home language is still being taught as a subject. English should be introduced as a subject in the second year of schooling.

This proposal, however, still requires the African child to learn three languages, which does little to alleviate his/her present language plight. The English-speaking child, by contrast, needs to learn only two. Language policy for education must have an equitable, non-discriminatory basis.

Heugh (op. cit.:218) draws three conclusions about a future language policy based upon the contributions of the liberation movements: firstly, the role of English will be one of significance; secondly, the African languages will acquire more prestige; and, thirdly, the role of Afrikaans is likely to decrease.

#### 3.3.4.1.2 Afrikaans

Afrikaans has a rich, variegated history of language planning, whose extent is evident from the following quote taken from van Rensburg (1986:258):

In South Africa most language planning activities are initiated for Afrikaans. Similarly, most results seen in this area, most studies on language planning problems, most comprehensive descriptions of language planning processes, and most evaluation studies on language planning processes have been done for Afrikaans (own translation).

The earliest form of language planning done for Dutch/Afrikaans dates back to the anglicisation attempts of Lord Charles Somerset, British Governor at the Cape Colony from 1814-1826 (Reagan, 1985:74; Reagan, 1986b:1-2). Somerset identified the school as the epicentre from where he would launch his attempts at anglicising the colony. The provision of free English-medium schools, and the promulgation of the 1865 Act on Education, determining English as the sole medium of instruction, formed two key strategies in his anglicisation policy (see Ponelis, 1984:36; Reagan 1986b:2).

Arguably the single most important act of language planning for Afrikaans was the establishment of the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* in August 1875, as it irrevocably changed the language debate and determined that Afrikaans, and not Dutch, would be the mother tongue of Afrikaners (Reagan, 1986b:2).

Reagan (ibid.) mentions four other significant language planning activities in Afrikaans, namely the founding of the South African Academy for Science and Art in 1908 (formerly the South African Academy for Language, Literature and the Arts), the publication, first in 1917, of the Word List and Spelling Rules for Afrikaans, setting a generally accepted standard for Afrikaans, the establishment of the Technical Language Bureau in 1950, and the implementation of the ideology of Christian National Education and the principle of mother tongue instruction following the 1948 electoral victory of the National Party.

It is inconceivable to discuss the amount of language planning done for Afrikaans without referring to the invaluable contribution of the South African Academy for Science and Art. The dictum of the Academy is summarised by the following statement appearing on its letterheads:

The aims of the Academy are: the maintenance and promotion of the Afrikaans language, literature and culture and of Dutch language and literature, and the promotion of South African history, arts, science and technology (own translation).

According to van Rensburg (1986:259), the Academy's most significant contribution lies in the field of standardisation. For example, it has assumed responsibility, through its Language Commission, for the written form of Afrikaans since its inception in 1908. The

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Academy, with the cooperation of the University of Stellenbosch, is also responsible for the *Dictionary of the Afrikaans Language (Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal)*, an on-going project of eight volumes which has covered the letters a - k thus far.

The Academy's endeavours to promote Afrikaans as a language of science and technology should also be noted. Numerous terminology word lists and science handbooks, notably on Mathematics, Algebra, and Chemistry, have been developed (van Rensburg, op. cit.:262). Most of the technical enrichment of the language has been done through the offices of the Technical Language Bureau (Vaktaalbuuro) founded in 1950 (Kloss, 1978:23). The development of Afrikaans as a language of science and research is the more remarkable when one considers that it is the only non-European and non-Asiatic language ever to be used in university teaching (Kloss, op. cit.:19).

Criticism has recently been voiced over the Academy's role in language planning issues. One question is whether it has concerned itself sufficiently with the numerous spoken varieties of Afrikaans (Prinsloo, 1986:274; van Rensburg, op. cit.:261). Stander and Jenkinson (1993), for example, plead for a language democratisation process whereby Standard Afrikaans can be extended to incorporate more varieties. Another attendant problem is the seemingly non-transparent process by which the Academy decides on spelling rules.

Standard Afrikaans, based upon the eastern dialect<sup>14</sup> of the language, is spoken by both people of colour and Whites. The choice of the eastern dialect as a standard has unfortunately led to the stigmatisation of the southwestern dialect, and has subsequently alienated the Coloured speakers of Kaapse Afrikaans from speakers of Standard Afrikaans (Ponelis, 1987:10). This choice, and the exclusion of Afrikaans people of colour from the proceedings of the Academy (Prinsloo, op. cit.:274), and, therefore, from decisions affecting their language use, were factors contributing to the popular view of Afrikaans as a White man's language.

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<sup>14</sup> The eastern dialect is spoken mainly in the area of Johannesburg and Pretoria (Ponelis, 1987:10).

According to Strevens (1980:66-67) a dialect is a language variety which differs from other varieties in grammar and lexis. Although dialects and accents (phonological characteristics) are paired in the majority of dialects, this is not the case in the standard form. Therefore, Standard English may be spoken in a variety of accents.

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Because Standard Afrikaans is spoken by the majority of Afrikaans-speaking people (Ponelis, *op. cit.*:10), the influence of its dialectical diversity<sup>15</sup> on the educational system is not as severe as is the case with the African vernaculars. However, this does not alleviate the plight of the Coloured Afrikaans-speaking child who has to learn Standard Afrikaans at school, which is, linguistically speaking, quite different from his home language (Reagan, 1985:80; Reagan, 1986b:9).

An important factor which language educationists have yet to acknowledge is the process of language shift<sup>16</sup> that is occurring within the Afrikaans language community, cutting across racial lines. Ponelis (1984:39), for example, reports that five percent (5%) of the Afrikaner elite are shifting towards English as their first language (the figure for English-speaking people changing to Afrikaans is 0,3 percent). It appears that Coloured Afrikaans-speaking people in the Cape Peninsula are also migrating to English (Prinsloo, 1984a:121; Odendal, 1984:204).

The reason for language shift among the Coloured community<sup>17</sup> may be either political, because Afrikaans is associated with the 'language of the oppressor' (Odendal, 1984:204), or because of the stigmatised status of the community's dialect (Ponelis, 1987:10).

The position of Afrikaans among Africans seems even more precarious than in the Coloured community. Firstly, only 77 000 Africans state that their home language is Afrikaans (Prinsloo, 1986:271), and, secondly, the attitude of Africans towards Afrikaans is

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<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the Afrikaans dialects, see Ponelis, *op. cit.*:7-8, and Stander and Jenkinson, *op. cit.*.

<sup>16</sup> Language shift refers to the changing choices people make about the language they use as a first language (Holmes, 1992:55). The reasons for language shift are manifold: the most cited reasons are economic, social, and political in nature (Holmes, *op. cit.*:65). For the distinction between mother tongue and first language see Ponelis, 1984:32).

<sup>17</sup> According to the 1980 census there are 2,25 million Afrikaans-speaking Coloureds (Prinsloo, 1986:271).

one of indifference (Odendal, 1984:205).<sup>18</sup> Some studies, however, indicate a measure of support for Afrikaans at school level. Prinsloo (1984a:120) reports moderate support among Black pupils, ranging between 19 and 27 percent, for Afrikaans as medium of instruction in Primary Schools in forms 1 and 5 respectively. Steyn (1984:27) reports that 90% of African students surveyed have chosen Afrikaans as a subject at secondary schools in the Cape Province.

Support among African teachers for Afrikaans as medium of instruction, however, is alarmingly low. Bot (1993:6,8), for example, states that only four percent (4%) support Afrikaans as medium of instruction throughout primary school.

Schuring (1979:34-39) contends that the relative importance Afrikaans has among Africans is merely a bread-and-butter issue. Economic reasons dictate, therefore, why Africans tend to speak to Whites more in Afrikaans than in English, why Afrikaans has gained such an importance as a school subject, and why its popularity steadily increases as a medium of instruction from lower primary school up to Standard 3. Schuring thus writes (op. cit.:61):

The most acceptable summarised statement about this state of affairs is probably that English is more prestigious, whereas Afrikaans has a more pragmatic value for South African Blacks between the ages of 15 and 54.

The debate surrounding Afrikaans has changed significantly since 1975.<sup>19</sup> The focus is now on its survival (Steyn, 1984:22). The change in focus coincides with a greater recognition of South Africa's multilingual nature and the place of Afrikaans in it; the underlying

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<sup>18</sup> Kotzé (1987) surveyed the attitudes of 151 African students of Afrikaans towards the language at the University of Zululand. To the questions 'Do you think that this course [the Afrikaans course at the University of Zululand] has changed anything about your view of the speakers? If "yes", is your attitude now more positive, or negative?', 69% answered positively. He, therefore, concluded that the indifference of many Africans towards Afrikaans related to their lack of contact with Afrikaans speakers (op. cit.:178).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the significance of the date; the Soweto riots broke out in 1976. Cf. Hartshorne (1987) for the events leading up to the riots.

dogma, however, that supports Afrikaans as an official language remains unchanged (see Prinsloo, 1980 and 1986; Steyn, 1984 and 1989; Ponelis, 1984; and Odendal, 1984).

The changing views on language policy are especially evident in Prinsloo's (1980, 1984b, and 1986) proposals. Based on the 1980 census, Prinsloo (1986) observes that the two official languages have limited penetration among Africans.<sup>20</sup> He therefore proposes that the official languages be further promoted among Africans, and that consideration be given to the introduction of official African languages on a regional basis (op. cit.:269). This proposal has come in for harsh criticism from Cluver (1992:122-123)<sup>21</sup> who contends that it

amounts to an extension of the use of language planning to support the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism or to protect white minority rights in a post-apartheid South Africa. It is highly unlikely that the members of the liberation movements will accept this continuation of a system that they have been protesting about.

A recurrent theme among these scholars is that the White Afrikaner community must get rid of the shackles of exclusivity, and must recognise its own rich linguistic diversity, notably that found in the Coloured community (Odendal, 1984:204; Steyn, 1984:18; and Prinsloo, 1986:274).

### 3.3.4.1.3 English

Language planning for English has chiefly been the provenance of the English Academy.<sup>22</sup> However, the role of the Academy in planning issues is very different from, for

<sup>20</sup> Forty-eight percent of Africans claim that they can speak Afrikaans, while the figure for English is forty-four percent. Many of these people are actually the same group (Prinsloo, op. cit.:269).

<sup>21</sup> Cluver (op. cit.:122) takes issue with Prinsloo who bases his proposal on maps which do not reflect the attitude of speakers of other languages toward Afrikaans. Earlier in the same study Cluver (op. cit.:112) observes that attitude studies have fairly limited value for the applied linguist, because '(I)n a fast-changing society language attitudes change as new political changes are introduced'. Perhaps Cluver should have heeded his own prophetic words, because Prinsloo's proposals are indeed close to those of the 1993 Constitution.

<sup>22</sup> The English Academy, a non-political body, was established in 1962 (Young, 1978:198).

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example, that of the South African Academy for Science and Art. Whereas the latter had a definitive role in developing Afrikaans into a modern language suitable as a medium of instruction and scientific research, the English Academy's role simply has been to provide a forum where its members could exchange views on language matters (O'Dowd, 1970). Subsequently, unlike the South African Academy for Science and Art, the English Academy 'does not seek to legislate on the usage of English' (O'Dowd, op. cit.:297).

In providing a forum for its members, the English Academy has tried to satisfy the demands of both mother tongue speakers and those who use it as a second language (O'Dowd, op. cit.:293). A particular example of the latter is the Academy's long-standing campaign to improve African education by assisting teachers in the areas of English language and literature teaching (Young, 1978:198). In 1973, for example, the Academy held a conference on the Teaching of English in African Schools in Roma, Lesotho, which resulted in the establishment of ELTIC (English Language Teaching Information Centre), an organisation actively involved in rendering professional assistance to African teachers of English (Kloss, 1978:23).

The involvement of the English Academy in African education must be seen partly in the context of the dominant position English occupies among Africans, and partly because of the extremely favourable attitudes Africans have towards English. Firstly, it is widely recognised today that English is the preferred medium of instruction and language of communication for most Africans (Ponelis, 1984:34; Prinsloo, 1984a:120; Amuzu, 1992:129). Secondly, English is often thought of as embodying certain values or qualities. For example, it is said to be 'precise', 'logical', and 'sophisticated'. The term 'precise' refers to the exactness of the language's lexical items, and which makes it exceptionally suitable in academic teaching, science and technology. 'Logical' is similar to 'precise', although it refers more to the exactness of the grammar. The last quality, 'sophistication', has a bearing on the extent of linguistic development evident in English (Schmied, 1991:165-167). The NEPI report (1994:38) poignantly summarises the African's view of English when it states

it is a language of access to a vast range of resources nationally and internationally, to higher education, to technology, to economic opportunities ... and a lingua franca both within the country and beyond its borders.

The African clamour for access to and instruction in English has given rise to much discussion about how the language can be provided to benefit the child (Young, op. cit.;

Chick, 1992; Schmied, op. cit.:99-117; Amuzu, 1992; NEPI, op. cit.:44-93). The need for careful planning in this regard becomes evident when one realises that English is taught as a second language to approximately 93,5% of the school population in South Africa (Young, op. cit.:190). Because language in education planning, and its attendant problems, form part of Chapter 4, this topic will not be discussed further here.

For many years the norms and standards of English usage taught at schools and universities have been those of the White English-speaking minority (Young, 1987:7). In 1986, however, Ndebele (1991) in his keynote address to the English Academy, argued for two issues *inter alia*: firstly, that South African English should be allowed to become a new English free of capitalism, and, secondly, that the future of English in South African society is not so much about what Africans have to learn about English, but what Whites have to unlearn about it.

The existence of a contemporary South African dialect(s) is a contentious issue. Lanham (1970 and 1978) seems to support the idea of a South African English dialect (cf. Lanham, 1978:138), but limits his investigation of the phonological variables (that is, the accents) to the four sociolects of South African English, namely Conservative SAE, Afrikaans SAE, Respectable SAE, and Extreme SAE in the *White* community. Recently, Mesthrie (1988) attempted to provide a brief description of another sociolect, namely South African Indian English (SAIE).

Titlestad (1994), leaving room for the possible emergence of a number of Englishes in South Africa, questions the existence of a distinct South African dialect. Most usage today is in fact Standard English. Deviations that do occur 'are more likely to be individual mistakes than the beginnings of a codifiable new English' (Titlestad, op. cit.:10). The position of English among the various groups in South Africa seems to substantiate Titlestad's (op. cit.) claim. It is, for example, the mother tongue of only 6,5% Africans, 12,2% Coloureds, and 47,4% Indians (Young, 1978:188). It would thus appear that much of Black, Coloured, and Indian English is an L2 variety. Other arguments which question the existence of newly-emerging South African Englishes are as follows (Titlestad, op. cit.:9):

- No grammars, or teaching text books exist on South African English; and,

- Branford's (1991) dictionary, which contains numerous South African words borrowed from other languages, hardly provides a basis for a new English.

It is significant that Mesthrie (op. cit.) carefully avoids characterising Natal Indian English, an L1 variety, as a dialect, but chooses to refer to it as a sociolect. Also significant is his observation that young speakers command a variety of informal and formal styles ranging respectively from the basilectal L2 variety to an acrolectal style approximating Standard English. In some speakers, however, the use of basilect and acrolect forms corresponds significantly with their level of education (Mesthrie, op. cit.).

It would, therefore, seem more appropriate to refer to South African English as a conglomerate of various language varieties, that is, different usages conditioned by different social conditions (Holmes, 1992:9).

Thus the contention is that South African English is indeed close to Standard English,<sup>23</sup> and that the teaching of the language should follow the Standard conventions. Titlestad (op. cit.:5) cautions against patronising attempts to use non-standard varieties as a teaching model, because these attempts will ultimately deprive the learner of the benefits Standard English offers:

One encounters certain people who, while themselves possessing all the advantages of access to Standard English, talk too readily or with a romantic fervour about a heavily indigenised South African English. But such an English would in fact deny to those that learn it all the advantages that these people themselves possess. This is often done under the aegis of the term 'empowerment'. It is Standard English, however, that brings empowerment.

The sociolectal use of various styles in Natal Indian English, as discussed by Mesthrie (op. cit.), raises another, little studied linguistic phenomenon in South Africa which has important implications for language study and teacher training, namely that of code-switching. Adendorff (1993) studied the academic and social functions of code-switching between three

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Quirk (1968) for a cogent discussion on the notion of 'Standard English'.

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Zulu-speaking teachers, their headmaster, and their pupils in an English poetry class. He (op. cit.:146-147) suggests that code-switching from English to Zulu has three purposes:

- Code-switching may be an attempt by the teacher to gain credibility from his students for the interpretation he offers;
- The teacher uses code-switching to extend the interpretation of the poem, and to clarify his use of English; and
- Code-switching to Zulu also has a symbolic function, because it marks Zulu as the language through which anyone in the class can be reached.

Code-switching in multilingual classrooms, especially those in formerly African schools, is sometimes seen as an educational tool to overcome intrinsic impediments caused by the complex language situation. Bot (1993:4), for example, reports that 63% of African teachers would like to use two or more languages in class. In Coloured and Indian schools the percentages are 64% and 53% respectively. It is significant that only 25% of teachers in formerly White schools prefer to use more than one language in the classroom.

Bot's (op. cit.) research, and the use of code-switching in language classrooms, unquestionably emphasise a desire by a sizeable number of teachers to establish multilingual classrooms. However, there are firm indications that many Africans are in favour of English as a *lingua franca* in national matters, and English as medium of instruction from the first year of schooling (Chick, 1992b; Lemmer, 1993:149ff.). The clamour for access to English is obviously not limited to Africans: in 3.3.4.1.2 it was shown that there is a clear tendency among Afrikaner elite, and Coloured Afrikaners, to adopt English as their first language. This shift of Afrikaners towards English was recently confirmed by Theron (1996) who interviewed a number Afrikaner families.

### 3.3.5 Language Planning After 1993

Little language planning has been done since 1993, and especially since the first democratic elections of April 1994. The discussion will not, therefore, focus on concrete examples of language planning, but on issues only now starting to emerge.

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The present debate about language issues has forced three matters to the fore, namely language status planning in the nine regions, medium of instruction policy, and the establishment of the Pan South African Language Board (PSALB).

### 3.3.5.1 Regional Language Status Planning

Language status planning, or planning for the official languages (in terms of Section 3.4 of the 1993 Constitution) of the nine regions, seems to be a relatively low priority issue in the various regions. At the time of writing only the Western Cape and Gauteng have announced their proposals regarding official languages. The former recognises Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa as its official languages and the latter all eleven official languages.

Status language planning is an intricate process dealing with very complex conceptual notions such as major and minority language. It would be wrong to equate the notions of major and minority *merely* with numerically big and small languages respectively.

The conceptual problems involved in these notions become clear if one considers the question 'what is a minority language?' The writer agrees with Haberland (1991:182) when he states that a language can only be a minority language *relative* to another. According to him, the only feasible relatum for a minority language is the national language. He (*op. cit.*:183), therefore, defines a minority language as follows:

A minority language (of a country) is a language existing in a country which is not the national language of this country. It is exactly its mode of existence which is at issue here.

This definition of Haberland's (*op. cit.*) may fit the language situation in the European Economic Community, now called, officially, the European Union. In South Africa, however, it has little application, because, should it be applied here, only the languages mentioned in Section 3.10c would qualify. But the distribution patterns of African languages in South Africa (*cf. Table 2.3.2b, p.19*) clearly show they are numerically better represented in some areas than in others. It would be difficult to avoid the conclusion, therefore, that, in certain areas, they would be minority languages.

A more appropriate definition of a minority language is advanced by Zuanelli (1991). She sees a minority language as one having a minor communicative prestige. Even an official language can, therefore, given certain prevailing conditions, be 'minorised'. For example, in communities where a minor language is particularly strong, an official language may be 'minorised' because of its low communicative prestige within that community (Zuanelli, *op. cit.*:295).

The linking of communicative prestige to a language's relative importance, has gargantuan implications for status language planning in the nine regions. This principle may be used, for example, to declare a language official only for a particular district within a province.

An example of such regional language innovation policy could be, for example, if the Northern Province agreed on the following language policy: English and Sesotho sa Leboa to be the official languages for the whole province, while Tshivenda, Xitsonga, and Afrikaans be official languages only in clearly defined areas of the province. It is doubtful whether such an accommodation of Afrikaans would contravene the principle of non-diminution in the 1993 Constitution, since Afrikaans at the commencement of the 1993 Constitution had no status in such areas as the TBVC homelands (Brown, 1991:24). Should this principle also be applied in other provinces, the position of Afrikaans in South Africa would diminish even further. Regional language innovation, Hobart (1977:399) argues, may lead to other benefits, such as improved language maintenance programmes. It is also likely that such a policy will lead to improved language development, especially of the African languages, and to an improvement in the perceived status of African languages, because they will be seen to fulfil useful purposes.

The usefulness of this linkage for language planning policy, however, is not without problems. Notions such as 'communicative prestige' are essentially a function of people's attitudes towards languages, which, because of their ephemeral nature, have limited application in language planning (Cluver, 1992:112). The changeable nature of attitudes towards language is also notably evident in post-colonial Africa where vernacularisation policies have become increasingly popular (Reagan, 1990:182).

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The above approach to status language planning requires vigorous research to acquire sufficient data on which policy decisions can be based. Without the necessary data the different provinces can hardly be expected to implement sound language policies. The language statistics South African language planners use are depressingly outdated and restricted (NEPI, 1994:21-25). Unfortunately, despite calls for a data-driven approach to language planning issues (Cluver, *ibid.*), language policy issues seem to receive little attention from politicians (NEPI, *op. cit.*:43).

Meanwhile, the research of Schuring (1990; cf. **Table 2.3.2b**, p.19) into the distribution of South African languages offers the best alternative for any speculative discussions regarding possible official languages on a regional level. The shaded languages in **Table 2.3.2b** (cf. p.19), together with Afrikaans and English, will most likely be the official languages in the various regions.

### 3.3.5.2 Medium of Instruction Policy

In the previous chapter it was shown how media of instruction policies have dominated, and continue to dominate, educational policies in South Africa. This contentious issue is unlikely to recede from public debate, especially in light of the provision by Section 32 of the 1993 Constitution.

The NEPI report (1994:40) mentions that a remarkable consensus has been reached between the previous government and the ANC with regard to media of instruction policies, namely that parents should be able to choose the medium of instruction.

Two main issues relating to media of instruction policies are emerging: first, how can access to English be provided for non-mother tongue speakers? What are the options? Can access best be provided through English as a medium of instruction or through the learning of English as a second language? Second, is mother tongue instruction feasible for all South Africans who want it? Is the present Constitutional guarantee to provide mother tongue instruction 'where practicable' an equitable one or should it be amended? Perhaps a third option, namely a merger of access to English and mother tongue instruction, should be considered. Unfortunately, this option has not been discussed at all in the South African context. Some of these questions will be further addressed in the next chapter.

In 1995 the Department of Education published a far-reaching document adumbrating present government thinking on the issue of media of instruction. The document proposes that:

- Instead of the term 'medium of instruction' 'languages of learning' be used;
- Schools offer, in future, at least two languages of learning;
- No student be disadvantaged because of the choice made in respect of languages of learning; and
- Schools become truly multilingual institutions.

### 3.3.5.3 The Pan South African Language Board (PSALB)

The forces that led to the establishment of the PSALB were numerous. Firstly, language planners, notably those in Afrikaans, have consistently argued since the 1980s in favour of a comprehensive arrangement to coordinate language planning in South Africa (Prinsloo, 1980:77; Prinsloo, 1986:274; van Rensburg, 1986:264). Secondly, the move towards democracy and the establishment of a non-racial society demanded that language planning be given a new focus (Senate Subcommittee on Languages, 1995:5). Democracy, in turn, entails that recognition be given to the African languages spoken by approximately eighty percent of the population (Senate Subcommittee on Languages, *op. cit.*:11). The urgency of giving more recognition to African languages is accentuated by Brown (1991:23) who reports FISRC statistics indicating that by the year 2000 twenty-two million Africans will be unable to communicate in either Afrikaans or English. Thirdly, the economic empowerment of Africans can only evolve through a more equitable language dispensation. Official bilingualism has led to the economic disempowerment of Africans because of their lack of communicative competence in both Afrikaans and English. It is against this backdrop that the PSALB has adopted the promotion of multilingualism as its main goal, and this has, therefore, become a strategy for the economic empowerment of Africans (*cf. Senate Subcommittee on Languages, op. cit.*:16). Commensurate with its aim of furthering multilingualism, the PSALB also sees itself as an agency actively involved in the process of nation-building (Senate Subcommittee on Languages, *op. cit.*:17).

Emanating from the PSALB's terms of reference (Section 3.10; *cf. also 2.4.5*), the Senate Subcommittee on Languages (*op. cit.*:20) asserts that the PSALB should aim to:

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- Develop equitably the linguistic resources of South Africa;
  - Develop a capacity that would meet the country's domestic and international communication needs;
  - Ensure that every person has equal access to information irrespective of his/her language;
  - Promote the learning of languages other than a person's mother tongue;
  - Ensure that equitable language services are provided; and,
  - Create a public awareness of the value of language in a multilingual society.

The new participatory approach to language planning envisaged by the PSALB is also evident in the proposals regarding its structure. Although the Senate Subcommittee on Languages (*op. cit.*) proposes four possible models (regionally based, language-based, sectorally based, and a language management network model),<sup>24</sup> it appears that the last model is preferred.

The present proposals regarding the language management network model provide for a main committee, whose members would be chosen for their expertise in language planning and constitutional law, and language management agencies. The latter would then comprise language commissions for each of the eleven official languages as well as one for South African Sign Language, and also special committees whose duties would include the coordination of literacy programmes, the administration of language learning centres, and the provision of books in African languages for school use.

It is clear that this preferred model represents a departure from the ethos of ethnic-based language planning. Members, notably those of the main committee, would be elected for their expertise and not because of their ethnic affiliation. The duties of the language commissions are envisaged as being restricted to corpus language planning, an aspect which has acquired some urgency in African languages (*Senate Subcommittee on Languages, op. cit.:25i-26*). The kind of members envisaged for the main committee, constitutional experts among others, substantiates a previous observation, namely that the language debate in future will essentially be about language rights.

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<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of these models, see *Senate Subcommittee on Languages, op. cit.:21-26*.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Regional status language planning in South Africa is impeded by a lack of sufficient data on the distribution of South African languages in the nine regions. The writer concludes that the different regions base their language policies upon the communicative prestige that languages have in the region as a whole, as well as in specific sub-regions. It is contended that such an approach may prove beneficial to the African languages in particular, as it could lead to the development of the languages in question, as well as to an improvement in their perceived status.

In the absence of scientific data it is furthermore concluded that the data provided by Schuring (1990) be used in order to determine the official languages of a particular region. Because of the non-diminution clause protecting Afrikaans and English, most regions would likely opt for a language policy in which Afrikaans and English, together with an African language or languages, are recognised as official.

Afrikaans and English, firmly established as media of instruction, will continue to fulfil these roles in educational matters.

The position of the African languages in South Africa as media of instruction is, however, very different from those of Afrikaans and English. Firstly, because of an underdeveloped vocabulary, there is scepticism whether they can be used as media of instruction. Secondly, until now they have been used as media of instruction mainly during the junior primary years. The use of African languages as media of instruction in secondary schools is almost non-existent. However, this does not mean that they cannot be used in this role. It is significant that both Afrikaans and Kiswahili were formerly in very similar situations. What is obviously needed to promote the African languages as media of instruction is a political commitment to these languages, as well as a determination to develop them sufficiently for their future role in this respect. The NEPI report (1994:17) justifiably contends that the African languages are in a Catch-22 situation: if they are not used as media of instruction, they will not be actively promoted or sufficiently developed to cope with post-primary education.

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It is interesting to note that the basis on which the 1993 Constitution is willing to provide mother tongue instruction, namely 'where practicable', is very similar to the way in which the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* provides access, namely 'where numbers warrant'. The Canadian experience has shown how fickle the English-speaking provinces are in their application of this proviso. The principle enshrined in Bill 101, namely that of 'any eligible child', appears to provide a more equitable basis.

The *Québécois* and Tanzanian language experiences both emphasise the need for political intervention so that languages may find the necessary space to assert themselves. South Africa also needs these kinds of interventionist policies so that its under-developed and previously slighted languages may take their rightful place, and to curb the dominant influence of other languages. If this is not done, the lofty ideals of the 1993 Constitution to protect South Africa's multilingual heritage will soon dissipate in the face of an emerging monolingual society.

The dialectical diversity of African languages may also become a contentious educational issue. Of concern here is evidence that more than fifty percent of Sotho and Nguni dialects have not yet been described, and that the relationships among African dialects are not properly understood. If the provision of mother tongue instruction entails instruction in the child's own dialect, then an educational system already overburdened by excessive pupil numbers and dwindling material resources, will be even further encumbered by the problems surrounding the plethora of dialects. This could so easily lead to a situation in which the whole educational system grinds to a halt instead of offering opportunities for learning.

This accentuates the need for large-scale interventionist policies aimed at researching and developing the African languages so that problems surrounding language standardisation may be squarely addressed. To accept dialectical diversity as an educational aim is to attend merely to the maladies of past language planning shortcomings, but does not address the root of the problem, namely language standardisation. The latter issue can only be addressed properly if enough research findings become available to indicate what the exact relationship is between languages and dialect and between dialects themselves.

The influence of Afrikaans dialectical diversity in educational issues is less pronounced than in the African languages, although it too has disempowered a large segment of the

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Afrikaans-speaking community, namely the Coloureds. Recent trends in democratising Afrikaans are expected to lead to major changes in Standard Afrikaans.

It has been argued that insufficient data exist to conclude confidently that there are various codifiable dialects in South African English. It seems that many varieties of South African English are actually second language varieties, a cacophonous testimony to past deficient language learning opportunities.

Notes

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## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to investigate media of instruction policies in multilingual contexts. Because the teaching of language in multilingual environments has been considerably influenced by studies on bilingual and trilingual education, media of instruction policies will be considered from this perspective.

Bilingual education<sup>1</sup> is a simple label for a complex phenomenon. Baker (1993:153), for example, presents a typology of bilingual education consisting of ten major types. The range of this study does not allow for an in-depth discussion of all ten approaches. Consequently, the writer has decided to present a cross-section of some of these types. In presenting this profile, the first two medium of instruction options mentioned by the NEPI report (1994; cf. also 2.2.1.1), namely *straight for English* and a *sudden transfer to English*, have been taken as point of departure because they are very similar to submersion and transitional bilingual education. Apart from these two, some language enrichment and language maintenance models are also discussed.

The aim is, therefore, to investigate media of instruction as used in submersion education, transitional bilingual education, immersion education, bilingual/trilingual education in the European School model, and in Community language teaching. Because Section 32b of the interim Constitution supports mother tongue instruction as an option, a brief conclusion will be appended to each model indicating whether mother tongue instruction, second language instruction, or a combination of both was used. Finally, based upon the above-mentioned models and conclusions drawn from previous chapters, a model for multilingual instruction for South Africa will be proposed. Therefore, the second aim listed under 1.2 is achieved.

In the course of each discussion it will be shown how media of instruction policies are closely related to the attainment of extra-curricular and broad socio-political goals. The media of instruction proposal for the South African context should also be seen from this perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> The notion of bilingual education has been, especially since the *Lau vs. Nichols* court case in the USA (cf. 4.2.2), expanded to include multicultural education (Macdonald, 1990b:48).

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Media of instruction policies should strive to achieve three goals, namely the promotion of the ideals of multilingualism and nation-building, and the provision of access to English (cf. 3.3.4.1.3).

## 4.2 Models of Bilingual Education

Media of instruction are used differently in the various models of bilingual education. The aim is now to investigate how they are used in submersion, transitional bilingual, French immersion programmes in Canada, the European Bilingual Schools, and in Community language teaching.

### 4.2.1 Submersion education

Baker (1993:154) uses a water metaphor to describe the salient characteristics of submersion education: the child, thrown into the deep end of a pool, is expected to swim without the help of floats or swimming lessons. All teaching is done through the majority<sup>2</sup> or most communicatively prestigious language, for example English, and not through the home language of the child. In South Africa, the 'straight for English' option (cf. NEPI, 1994) is an example of the use of a medium of instruction in submersion education.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of submersion education is the ultimate social and cultural assimilation of the child into the majority or prestigious language (Baker, *op. cit.*:152).

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<sup>2</sup> In bilingual education a distinction is often made between majority and minority languages. A majority language refers to the language which has the most speakers. A minority language, by contrast, designates the language of minor linguistic or ethnic groups such as foreigners. In 3.3.5.1 it has been argued that it would be better to speak of majorised or minorised languages.

<sup>3</sup> Both Macdonald (1990b:93) and the NEPI report (1993:186) erroneously identify the 'straight for English' option as an example of immersion. Immersion education involves the teaching of majority language students in an L2 (cf. 4.2.3). African students, however, mostly speak languages that have been minorised by past language policies; they share, therefore, the same predicament as minority language students elsewhere (cf. previous footnote).

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Another example of submersion education is *structured immersion*,<sup>4</sup> a fashionable language programme in the United States which should not be confused with the Canadian (French) immersion programmes. A structured immersion programme differs from other submersion programmes in that the teacher, although (s)he teaches solely in the majority/prestigious language, does *understand* the home language of the pupil and is initially willing to accept contributions in that language (Padilla, 1991:46; Baker, op. cit.:154).

Submersion language programmes, as Baker (ibid.) has shown, have clear social, political and economic goals, as his quotation from a speech by Roosevelt in 1917 also shows:

We must have but one flag. We must have but one language. That must be the language of the Declaration of Independence, of Washington's Farewell Address, of Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech and Second Inaugural. We cannot tolerate any attempt to oppose or supplant the language and culture that has come down to us from the builders of the republic with the language and culture of any European country. The greatness of this nation depends on the swift assimilation of the aliens [sic] she welcomes to her shores. Any force which attempts to retard that assimilation process is a force hostile to the highest interests of our country.

In the United States of America the process of language assimilation is often compared to the metaphor of the *melting pot*, meaning that all languages and cultures are thrown into the crucible from which **one language and one culture** must emerge.

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<sup>4</sup> The term structured immersion has been developed, as a substitute for Canadian immersion programmes, by Baker and de Kanter (1983) to distinguish it from submersion teaching. Structured immersion has been justifiably characterised as a *monolingual remedial* method aimed at the linguistic and cultural assimilation of its students, and as such contrasts sharply with the *bilingual enrichment* approach of Canadian immersion teaching (Crawford, 1989:117).

\* The 'English-only' movement,<sup>5</sup> comprising the organisations 'US English' and English First, subscribes to this idea of the melting pot and challenges<sup>6</sup> bilingual education on the grounds that it impedes the cultural and linguistic assimilation of minority groups into the cultural life of the United States of America (Padilla, op. cit.:39). This movement lobbies trenchantly for the enactment of an English-language amendment which would make English the official language of the United States of America (Baker, op. cit.:254; cf. Porter, 1990:208-209 for two specific proposals in this regard).

The English-only campaign has led to seventeen states adopting legislative measures making English their official language (Porter, op. cit.:211). These measures have far-reaching implications. They are (Crawford, op. cit.:53):

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- The ideal of cultural assimilation has become the focus point of language education policy;
- The usefulness of bilingual education has therefore been called into question; and,
- The implication for language pedagogy has led to confusion; questions such as 'what languages should be taught?', and 'how can we teach English most effectively to students of limited-English proficiency?' are now being asked.

Submersion policies in education, Padilla (op. cit.:42) argues, lead to a 'severe loss of self-esteem and alienation from society'. The experience of alienation is not limited to the individual, but may have catastrophic effects on society, and also on academic achievement (Padilla, op. cit.:43).

<sup>5</sup> The 'English-only' movement is being counteracted by 'English-plus', a pro-bilingual group, and by academics<sup>^</sup> such as Padilla (1991). For a discussion of the origins of English-only, cf. Crawford, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> English-only also attacks bilingual education for being ineffective in producing bilinguals with sufficient English skills, and for entrenching divisions based upon language grounds (cf. Padilla, op. cit.). For a rebuttal of these criticisms, cf. Crawford, op. cit.:86-96; Padilla, op. cit., and Baker, op. cit.:180-186.

It should be noted that, in general, the criticism of bilingual education is often criticism of transitional bilingual education with its emphasis on assimilation and integration (cf., for example, Porter's criticism, 1991:74ff.). Bilingual education is, however, not limited to transitional bilingual education, but is an umbrella term for very diverse approaches (cf. Baker, op. cit.:151).

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Skutnabb-Kangas (1977) has argued compellingly for a close correlation between double semilingualism<sup>7</sup> and poor academic achievement. Finnish children in Swedish schools whose command of Finnish is poor when entering school, generally fare even poorer in Swedish. The converse is also true: those with superior skills in their mother tongue, also perform better in Swedish.

Clyne (1991:117) asserts that assimilationist approaches lead invariably to a low estimation of the home language, which results in a poor proficiency of the home language, and poor performance in the second language.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988:26) cites Zambia as an African country which has experimented with English submersion programmes. The results are generally poor, academically and linguistically; in general, these programmes have served to empower only the élite.

It is thus clear that instruction in submersion education takes place through the medium of a second language. Although structured submersion does recognise the home language of the child, this is only a pedagogical strategy to facilitate a smooth transfer to second language instruction.

#### 4.2.2 Transitional Bilingual Education

The origins of transitional bilingual teaching are closely connected to the campaign of the civil rights movement which resulted in the signing into law of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the enactment of the Bilingual Education Act (1968),<sup>8</sup> and the landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974).

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<sup>7</sup> Double semilingualism usually occurs in (submersion) bilingual education when children have a poor command of both the medium of instruction and the mother tongue (Skutnabb-Kangas, op. cit.:195).

<sup>8</sup> The Bilingual Education Act was added as Title VII to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Malakoff and Hakuta, 1990:31).

Title VI, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or national origin, provides the courts with a mechanism to enforce schools to provide education to students with limited English proficiency. Title VII transcends the provisos of Title VI by authorising resources to further bilingual educational programmes,<sup>9</sup> to train teachers, to develop instructional materials, and to engage parental support (Crawford, 1989:32-33; Malakoff and Hakuta, 1990:30-32).

The Lau court case began in 1970 when Steinman, the lawyer of Kinney Lau and 1 789 other Chinese pupils, filed a class action suit on their behalf, claiming that their poor performance at school was due to their lack of understanding of the medium of instruction. Although the Federal district and appeal courts decided in favour of the school officials, the Supreme Court overruled their decisions and found that:

(T)here is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from meaningful education (cited by Crawford, *op. cit.*:36).

The Supreme Court decision was immediately seized upon by the Office for Civil Rights to force districts to introduce so-called Lau remedies which would cater for the language needs of students with limited English proficiency.<sup>10</sup> In a further bold step, ostensibly to win Hispanic votes, the Administration of President Carter proposed on 5 August 1980, three months before Election Day, new regulations which decreed that schools should provide bilingual education where at least twenty-five students of limited English proficiency of the same language group were enrolled for two consecutive years (Crawford, *op. cit.*:41-43).

<sup>9</sup> Bilingual educational programmes refer to those programmes which allow for the limited use of native languages in instruction (Crawford, 1989:32). The intention of the Bilingual Education Act is thus clearly the more effective teaching of English through the transitional use of the mother tongue (Paulston, 1992b:40).

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that Congress enacted the Equal Education Act in 1974, several months after the Lau decision. Section 1703f of this act stipulates that all public school districts should 'take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instruction programs' (Malakoff and Hakuta, *op. cit.*:35).

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After the Republicans' landslide victory, President Reagan reiterated his Administration's support for an undiluted assimilationist language-in-education policy that would accelerate the assimilation of the USA's minority languages into English:

it is absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual education program that is now openly, admittedly dedicated to preserving their [students speaking a language other than English] native language and never getting them adequate in English so they can go out into the job market and participate (cited by Crawford, *op. cit.*:43).

The attempts to establish bilingual education in the USA were, therefore, clearly a strategy to recognise cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity (Malakoff and Hakuta, *op. cit.*:31).

Baker (1993:156) describes the characteristics and aim of transitional bilingual education as follows:

The aim of transitional bilingual education is also **assimilationist**. It differs from submersion education by language minority students temporarily being allowed to use their home language, and often being taught through their home language, until they are thought to be proficient enough in the majority language to cope in mainstream education.

It is thus clear that option 2 - offering a sudden transfer from the mother tongue to second language medium - of the Department of Education and Training in South Africa (cf. NEPI, 1994:29) strongly resembles transitional bilingual education in the USA.<sup>11</sup> There appears, however, to be a significant difference in that the South African model retains the mother tongue as a subject in the curriculum. It is not clear from the literature whether this is the case in transitional bilingual education.

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that both Skutnabb-Kangas (1988:23) and Baker (*op. cit.*:153) view African education in South Africa as a segregationist model. This model is discussed here, because it also is assimilationist in its intentions, and because it also entails a transfer from the mother tongue to a major second language medium of instruction.

Two major models may be distinguished within transitional bilingual education, namely an early exit and a late exit model (Baker, op. cit.:156; for the South African counterpart of the late exit model, cf. NEPI, *ibid.*). The early exit model allows a maximum of two years mother tongue instruction/assistance; the late exit model accepts approximately forty percent mother tongue instruction until the sixth grade (Baker, *ibid.*). The rationale for this model is that, while the child receives instruction/assistance in his home language, his communicative skills in the second language should be optimally developed so that when transfer occurs, he is able to cope with second language instruction.

The criterion educationists usually apply when deciding at which stage to transfer a child from home to second language instruction, is whether the child has developed sufficient communicative skills in the second language. Cummins (1986), reflecting on the relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement, distinguishes between two kinds of language proficiencies, namely *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) and *cognitive/academic language proficiency* (CALP). The former refers to skills obtained in face-to-face communicative situations. The latter, by contrast, designates language processing in academic contexts.<sup>12</sup>

Cummins (1984:58-60) contends, therefore, that the academic failure of minority students in mainstream education can often be attributed to educationists who failed to realise that students should obtain a *certain threshold* before they can be transferred from mother tongue to second language instruction. Note that this threshold hypothesis - within the context of transitional bilingual education - actually presumes *two* thresholds: first, a child has to attain a minimum threshold in L1 or L2 before he can successfully interact in that language; and, second, that the attainment of a higher threshold in bilingual proficiency may be a prerequisite before long-term cognitive effects are established.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For a critique of the BICS/CALP distinction, cf. Baker (op. cit.:10-13). Two points of Baker's (op. cit.) criticism are worth mentioning: firstly, language fluency may be the result of a larger number of competencies, and, secondly, the relationship between language development and cognitive development may not be as unequivocal as Cummins (op. cit.) suggests.

<sup>13</sup> The second, higher threshold hypothesis may, therefore, explain why some bilinguals are reported to show rapid academic progress (Cummins, op. cit.:60).

Macdonald (1990a:161-162) has shown convincingly that, in the South African situation, the transfer from mother tongue to second language teaching takes place in a context where the child's cognitive abilities and vocabulary have not been sufficiently prepared.

To prepare the child cognitively for the transfer, Cummins (1986:153) proposes that the curriculum, prior to the transfer, should move rapidly from context-embedded cognitively undemanding tasks to context-reduced cognitively demanding tasks.<sup>14</sup>

Transitional bilingual education, therefore, makes allowance for mother tongue medium of instruction, but only as an interim measure to prepare the pupil sufficiently for the eventual transfer to second language medium of instruction. The duration of mother tongue medium of instruction depends whether an early exit or late exit model has been chosen.

#### 4.2.3 Immersion Language Instruction

The origins of French immersion programmes in Canada can be traced back to the Quiet Revolution in Québec in the early 1960s and the concomitant resurgence of the French language. As a result the French language gained a currency as a vehicle for communication in all spheres of life in Québec as it never had before (Genesee, 1984:33).

Dissatisfied with the low French proficiency of their children after numerous years of French second language teaching in mainstream schools, and concerned that their children might not be able to compete for scarce employment (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988:27), anglophone parents solicited the advice of Wilder Penfield of the Montreal Neurological Institute and Wallace Lambert of McGill University to develop a new strategy for language teaching. Out of

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<sup>14</sup> Macdonald (op. cit.:174) provides an example of what such a South African curriculum may look like. Cf. Cummins (op. cit.:153) for the distinction context-embedded and context-reduced communication. In the former participants in the communication process negotiate meaning by drawing heavily on situational and paralinguistic cues, and is thus characteristic of the language context in which BICS flourishes. In the latter context meaning is negotiated by using linguistic cues. A shared reality in which meaning can be negotiated between interlocutors cannot be assumed. CALP is a prerequisite for such communicative situations.

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this partnership of parents and experts in the field of language neurology and bilingualism evolved the French immersion programmes (Genesee, *op. cit.*:34).

Canadian French immersion refers to language teaching programmes whereby speakers of a majority language, namely English, are instructed through the medium of a second language, which in this case is French (Skutnabb-Kangas, *ibid.*).<sup>15</sup>

Depending on the age at which a child commences with the programme and the time spent in the programme, three alternatives in French immersion may be identified. They are:

- Early total immersion in which all instruction takes place through the medium of French. The programme commences at Kindergarten and continues to grade two. During these three years the children are taught all subjects through the medium of French, as well as to read and to write. This refers to the so-called immersion phase. In the second, namely the bilingual phase, which starts in grade two, three or four, children are introduced to English language arts for approximately 20% of the day. Instruction time is then steadily increased to about 60% in grade six. A maintenance course follows in secondary schools where children can choose to receive French instruction of up to 40% of their courses (Swain and Lapkin, 1982:9; Genesee, *op. cit.*:34-35).
- Early partial French immersion commences in grade 1, and not in Kindergarten which is conducted through the medium of English. Early partial immersion further differs from early total immersion in that the two major languages, English and French, are used equally as media of instruction through primary school (Swain and Lapkin, *op. cit.*:12).
- In late immersion programmes the introduction of French medium of instruction is postponed to grades 7 or 8. Two options are usually permitted: in the one year immersion option, all, or most, curriculum instruction is taught through French for one calendar year; in the two year option the same schedule is repeated in the second year. Students are usually prepared for a late immersion programme by French sec-

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Crawford (1989:114) for the goals of Canadian immersion programmes.

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ond language instruction in the earlier grades, as well as by a transitional course during the first months of the late immersion programme, in which students are provided with the necessary language skills to learn the subject matter effectively (Genesee, *op. cit.*:35-36; Harley, 1991:10).

Swain and Lapkin (*op. cit.*:14) mention that the aim of the immersion programmes is not always the attainment of full bilingualism. Rather, the programmes aim at three levels of bilingualism: a basic level which provides a student with an elementary proficiency to conduct simple conversations, and to read basic texts in French; an intermediate level allowing students to read newspapers, to understand radio and television broadcasts, and to participate adequately in conversations; and an upper level which allows students to further their education through the medium of French at college or university. They caution, however, that these goals have not yet been tested empirically (*ibid.*).

Research into the learning outcomes of French early immersion programmes<sup>16</sup> concerns three major issues, namely 'what is the effect of the programmes on the development of students' English skills?', 'what is the effectiveness of teaching in French on the students' development of French communicative skills?', and 'what is the effect of French medium of instruction on overall academic achievement?'

The research in respect of the first issue, may be summarised as follows:

- Students in immersion classes receive lower scores than mainstream students in the first few grades (Swain and Lapkin, *op. cit.*:36). However, soon after the introduction of the English language component, and especially at the end of grade 5, early immersion students, outperform mainstream students in areas such as punctuation, spelling, vocabulary and usage (Swain and Lapkin, *op. cit.*:36-37; Harley, *op. cit.*:11);

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<sup>16</sup> Due to restrictions of space only the major findings pertaining to early immersion programmes are provided. Extensive evaluations of French immersion programmes have been done by Swain and Lapkin, *op. cit.*; Genesee, *op. cit.*; Swain, 1986; Swain, Lapkin and Andrew, 1986.

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- Swain and Lapkin (op. cit.:39) also report a study in which teachers compared the writing skills of early immersion students to those of mainstream students. The results were found to be comparable;
  - The overall impression, namely that students' English skills do not suffer as a consequence of French immersion programmes, is substantiated by parents who say that their children have not suffered not all (Swain and Lapkin, op. cit.:40).

Research findings yield overall positive outcomes also in connection with the second question. The major findings are as follows:

- Genesee (op. cit.:39) has found that, when the performance of early immersion students is compared to an English control group, immersion students are vastly superior in all French language tests;
- Early immersion students have developed excellent listening and reading skills when compared to native speakers. In some instances these students have obtained scores in listening comprehension tasks matching those of native French speakers of the same age (Genesee, op. cit.:39);
- Early immersion students have also attained strong discourse skills in French. Their coherence ratings in open-ended production tasks approximate native French speakers of the same age (Harley, op. cit.:13);
- The production skills of early immersion students are being ranked as in the 'high range', although not on the same level as native French speakers (Genesee, op. cit.:39). Harley (ibid.) states that a general consensus is emerging that the programmes need adjustment in this area so that grammatical and sociolinguistic skills may be improved.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Questions of how these programmes may be adjusted have led to research in two directions: the one track attempts to do a diagnostic analysis of the second language development of immersion students, and the second investigates classroom processes in immersion (Harley, op. cit.:14-16).

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With respect to the third question, research seems to indicate that students' academic achievement is not detrimentally affected by French medium of instruction. The findings are most consistent with early total immersion programmes. Genesee (op. cit.:38), for example, mentions that early immersion students acquire a competence in mathematics that is as good as that of an English control group. The results obtained by Genesee (op. cit.) appear to confirm Swain and Lapkin's (op. cit.) earlier findings. In particular Swain and Lapkin (op. cit.:59) found that there was no statistical difference between the performance in a mathematical test of early immersion students and an English control group. Although the English control group, in three instances, scored significantly higher than the immersion students in one or two of the subtests, they never obtained higher marks in the test as a whole. By contrast, the early immersion students produced, in four instances, superior performances in the test as a whole.

An important question raised about immersion programmes is whether they can be used to teach students of minority languages or students whose language is minorised. The view has been expressed by Baker and de Kanter (1983) that, because immersion programmes show great promise, they should at least be tried in the USA.

Various reasons could be put forward for not using immersion programmes for minority language students:

- Canadian immersion programmes involve two major languages, English and French. It is furthermore significant that the programmes only involve students from the most prestigious language of the two, namely English. The reason is that, should English immersion programmes be developed for French-speaking Canadians, it may accelerate language-shift towards English. The nett result would then be subtractive bilingualism, and not additive bilingualism as is at present the case with French immersion programmes (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988:27).

Subtractive approaches to bilingualism, Crawford (1989:117) contends,

produce a disproportionate number of children who fall behind in class, question their ethnic identity, and drop out of school.

Genesee (op. cit.:50) also emphasises that respect for the home language of the child during an immersion programme is of vital importance. When minority language

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students, however, are involved they find it difficult to maintain their home language.

- Language teaching to minority language students often occurs in a high anxiety environment (cf. Paulston, 1992b:40). For this reason immersion programmes are unsuitable for minority language students, because their success depends on a low anxiety context as provided by Canadian immersion (Crawford, op. cit.:116).
- Many researchers have shown how important parental support is for the success of Canadian immersion education (cf. Cummins, 1984:64; Baetens Beardsmore and Swain, 1985), and it is this factor which is lacking in the environment of minority language students. These students, when acquiring a second language, frequently experience communicative problems with their parents, because the latter lack the communicative skills of the new, acquired language.

Richard Tucker, an eminent scholar on French immersion, also cautions that the programme may not be suitable in any context (cited by Crawford, *ibid.*):

Although the general assertion that many children can acquire a second language and content material coincidentally is, in all probability correct, it does not imply that the most effective way to educate every child, regardless of demographic, sociopolitical, or other circumstances, is by total [immersion] in a second language.

It is, therefore, difficult to see how a similar programme could be beneficially used in the South African context, especially in view of the principle of multilingualism and the desire expressed in the 1993 Constitution to promote African languages. It seems as if English immersion programmes should, therefore, not be developed for speakers of African languages, for the same reason they have not been developed for French-speakers.

Consideration may be given, however, to developing immersion programmes in the African languages for speakers of Afrikaans and English, even though the economic incentive, which is so dominant in Québec, is presently lacking in South Africa. The situation may, however, change dramatically in future as African languages take their rightful place in South African society.

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It is obvious, in conclusion, that French immersion programmes show considerable variation in the manner in which media of instruction are used. All three variations, however, have one common denominator: both the home language and the second language are used as media of instruction to a greater or lesser degree.

#### 4.2.4 European Bilingual School Models

Medium of instruction policies in the European bilingual/trilingual schools must be considered in light of the aim of the European Union, namely to foster the integration of member states within the Union.

Two programmes which aim at accelerating the pace of European integration, and breaking down language barriers between the individual members, may be briefly examined. The ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes<sup>18</sup> of the Commission of European Communities aim at promoting the spread of linguistic skills in the nine official languages through educational programmes.

The goal of ERASMUS is to enable students to complete part of their university training in universities of other member states. Although the nature of ERASMUS differs considerably from institution to institution because of the different needs involved, it has definitive implications for language acquisition. One ERASMUS programme, for example, involves the exchange of second year students between the Law Faculties of the Universities of London and Paris. During the exchange year the students not only receive tuition in different legal systems, but also receive instruction through the medium of a foreign language.

The purpose of the LINGUA programme is to develop linguistic competences in three languages in secondary school pupils. The programme does not prescribe which languages should be taken, but leaves the choice open between the nine official languages.

Both the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes are motivated by the following:

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<sup>18</sup> The discussion of the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes is based upon Baetens Beardsmore, 1993.

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- A recognition of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe; and
  - The enhancement of communication without the imposition of a *lingua franca* which is unacceptable to member states, or the privileging of certain languages.

Against this integrationist trend of the ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes, three other successful European models of multilingual education may be distinguished, namely the trilingual educational system of Luxembourg, The European School Network, and the Foyer Model of Brussels.

#### 4.2.4.1 Trilingual Education in Luxembourg

The educational system in Luxembourg occupies a unique position in that the entire school population receive their education while progressing through three media of instruction.

Initially the monolingual child commences his schooling through the medium of his home language, namely Letzeburgish. Although the latter is the sole medium of instruction in Kindergarten and in Grade 1, the child is also introduced to German as a subject in the first year of primary school. From Grade 2 Letzeburgish is rapidly replaced by German, so that by Grade 6 the transition to German as medium of instruction has been completed. Simultaneously, however, French is also introduced as a subject in Grade 2 to prepare him/her for French medium of instruction at secondary school level. Mathematics in Grade 3, interesting enough, is taught through French medium of instruction. At secondary schools German is then speedily replaced by French as medium of instruction (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993:105-106).

Baetens Beardsmore (op. cit.:107) mentions that the trilingual system is extremely effective as is shown by the high success rate of students qualifying for tertiary education. Furthermore, the language proficiency students attain must be sufficiently high to enable them to further their tertiary studies in neighbouring countries as there are no universities in Luxembourg.

Trilingual education in Luxembourg is, therefore, unique in that a child receives instruction in three languages. The child first receives instruction through his mother tongue. Then in a subsequent phase instruction takes place through a second language which is

linguistically related to the home language. In the third phase all instruction is given through a third language, namely French.

#### 4.2.4.2 The European School Network<sup>19</sup>

The European School Network comprises nine institutions in five different countries, and aims to provide education for the children of European civil servants, although it is obliged to take in children from less advantaged groups subject to the availability of space. The Network is sometimes, because of its composition, mistakenly viewed as an elitist institution. Each school consists of nine linguistic sub-sections, and each sub-section follows the same curriculum irrespective of medium of instruction (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993:107).

The following principles underlie the European School Network (Baetens Beardsmore and Swain, 1985; Baetens Beardsmore, op. cit.):

- Children receive all their education in one of the nine linguistic sub-sections, ensuring, therefore, respect for the child's cultural and linguistic background. The aim is, therefore, language maintenance within a very complex multilingual society;
- Most teaching is initially done in the home language of the pupil;
- All pupils are required to acquire and to receive instruction in a second language. The second language used for instruction is known as the 'vehicular language' of which there are three, namely English, French, and German;
- The study of a third language is compulsory from Grade 3;
- The higher the student progresses through the system, the more instruction he receives through the medium of the second and third language;
- All pupils receive so-called communal lessons from primary school onwards to facilitate their integration into the school;
- All qualified teachers are native speakers of the language in which they teach.

Baetens Beardsmore (op. cit.:108) states that, since the inception of the programme, the schools have obtained a success rate of approximately ninety percent (90%) in the

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the history of the European School Network cf. Baetens Beardsmore and Swain (1985).

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university entrance examinations, an indication that the emphasis on multilingualism has no detrimental effect on academic achievement.

It is significant that the Commission of European Communities and the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe started a process in May 1990 to determine to what extent the experience gained in European School Network by using an L2 for instruction in non-language subjects can be extended to public schools (Baetens Beardsmore, *ibid.*).

The policy regarding media of instruction in the European School Network is, therefore, similar to that in trilingual education (cf. 4.2.4.1). It appears, however, that the European School Network differs mainly from trilingual education in that more teaching is done through the home language, especially during the first formative years of a child. It shares with trilingual education the characteristic that a child is progressively more exposed to second and third language instruction the further (s)he progresses with his/her school career.

#### 4.2.4.3 The Foyer Model of Brussels<sup>20</sup>

The aim of the Foyer Model becomes apparent when one considers the demographic situation of Brussels. This city has two official languages, namely French, comprising fifty percent of the population, and Dutch, twenty percent. Schools are segregated largely on the basis of these two languages, although a school has to provide second language instruction in the other official language. Apart from the Dutch and French, there are about thirty percent foreigners and 'new' Belgians, that is, immigrants who have settled permanently in Brussels.

The language of wider communication is undoubtedly French. However, Dutch has gained an importance beyond that which the numbers of its speakers would suggest. This language has, in particular, come to represent qualities such as 'non-foreign' and 'integrated', qualities which are highly valued for employment by commerce and industry.

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<sup>20</sup> The discussion is based upon Leman (1990). Baetens Beardsmore's (1993:109-110) discussion of the Foyer project is based upon the same source.

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It is therefore not surprising, given this background, that foreigners value linguistic skills in both French and Dutch. The Foyer aims to integrate the foreigner segment of the population by making them trilinguals.

The Foyer initiative is attached to the Dutch-speaking primary schools, mainly because these schools are more scarcely populated than their French counterparts. Each Foyer-affiliated school caters for the education of a specific minority group, which may be Italian, Spanish, Moroccan, or Turkish. Because the Foyer initiative is attached to an ordinary Dutch primary school, the entrance figure of minority pupils is fixed below that of the Dutch population to resist any attempt to displace Dutch as medium of instruction.

A typical Foyer programme commences with a three year Kindergarten programme and extends over six years of primary school. The ultimate aim is trilingualism (home language, Dutch, and French) at the end of the sixth year of primary school.

The first three years of Kindergarten is devoted to a study of the home language. During this period a child would spend about fifty percent with his own ethnic group, and fifty percent with other children.

Dutch is only introduced in the first year of primary school for approximately thirty percent of the time. All the teaching of Dutch is done in classes separate from mainstream students. Sixty percent of the time is spent on activities within the home language. Ten percent is set aside for integration activities.

In the second year, teaching in the home language decreases to fifty percent of the available time. Integration activities, however, are increased to thirty percent. The teaching of Dutch, in a separate group, forms twenty percent of the curriculum. The teaching of mathematics takes place through Dutch with mainstream children.

In the third year ninety percent of all teaching takes place through the medium of Dutch in classes fully integrated with mainstream students. Instruction in the home language takes place for three or four hours per week. Students are now also introduced to French. It should be noted that, because French is the language of the streets, most students possess a smattering of the language.

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Baetens Beardsmore (1993:110) states that, although preliminary reports are favourable, no extensive evaluation of the programme has been completed. Its effect, for instance, on academic achievement is not known.

The Foyer Model, like trilingual education and the European School Network, has trilingualism as its aim. A child, therefore, receives instruction through three media, initially through his/her mother tongue, but in subsequent years also through the medium of Dutch and French.

#### 4.2.4.4 Evaluation: the European School Network and French Immersion

Baetens Beardsmore and Swain (1985) compare the level of French proficiency Canadian immersion students have attained with those levels obtained by students attending a European Network school in Brussels. From their study they conclude that:

- Canadian immersion is essentially a *language enrichment* programme designed to promote bilingualism in a *monolingual* environment which differs from the European programme which aims at *language maintenance* in a *multilingual* context; and
- It is possible, notwithstanding the kind of language teaching, to attain very similar levels of language proficiency provided that one takes cognizance of the linguistic environments in which one teaches.

The success of the Canadian and European School models, therefore, may be ascribed to the measure of success they had in manipulating their linguistic environments. For example, the European school attained a very high proficiency in French after only 1 325 hours of instruction. This contrasts with Canadian students who had 4 500 hours of French instruction before they could obtain similar levels. The difference, therefore, lies in the linguistic environment. The Canadian students coming from monolingual backgrounds were thus in a slightly disadvantaged position compared to the European students who grew up in a city dominated by French.

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All three European models clearly use media of instruction to attain societal goals of integration. The way these school programmes have handled diversity within the broader aim of unity should be further investigated for the South African context.

It is also significant that Canadian immersion, and the European Bilingual School programmes, use mathematics as a stepping stone to transfer students to a new medium of instruction. The reason for this has not been explained by the literature. This may be because the extent of vocabulary pertaining to mathematics is fairly limited when compared, for example, with history or geography. It was argued earlier that the lack of sufficient vocabulary might be a major reason why students did not cope with the transfer to a new medium of instruction in African schools in South Africa. Macdonald (1990a:161-162), for example, estimates that the transfer to a new medium of instruction from Std 2 to Std 3 requires an increase in vocabulary of approximately 1 000%.

#### 4.2.5 Community Language Project

Hamers and Blanc (1989) contend that community bilingual education is aimed at a 'multicultural synthesis'. In their striving towards a synthesis of their various cultures, the different communities decide jointly on the languages in which instruction will be given. In this *ideal* model both majority and minority languages are used as media of instruction. The choice of languages depends on the school's linguistic environment, and it becomes, therefore, the task of the school to reflect the linguistic composition of the communities.

In Canada community language teaching is known as heritage language teaching.<sup>21</sup> The latter term has, however, a major disadvantage in that it focuses on the past; it appears, therefore, better to use the term community languages (cf. also Baker, 1993:163).

Community language teaching occurs in Canada against the background of increased levels of migrant populations and a deliberate federal policy to advance multiculturalism.

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<sup>21</sup> An excellent description of heritage language teaching is offered by Cummins (1992). The positive influence of heritage language teaching on the learning of especially English and French has been pointed out by Swain and Lapkin (1991).

The manner in which Canadian provinces handle the teaching of community languages differs from province to province. In Ontario, for example, community language teaching is primarily aimed at language maintenance; therefore, only two and a half hour language instruction is offered outside the regular school programme. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, however, offer bilingual language programmes in which at least fifty percent of instruction is presented through community languages (Cummins, 1992:282-283). Unlike in Canadian immersion and in the European Bilingual schools, the teaching of technical and science subjects is done through the medium of the majority language (Baker, *ibid.*).

Cummins (*op. cit.*:284) cites a survey among school boards done by the Canadian Education Association which has identified the following advantages of community language teaching:

- Positive attitude and pride in one's background;
- Better integration of the pupil into school and society;
- Increased tolerance of other peoples and cultures;
- Increased cognitive and affective development;
- It facilitates the learning of other languages;
- Increased job opportunities;
- Stronger links between parents and school; and
- Responsive to community needs.

In Australia<sup>22</sup> there has been, since the 1970s, a general trend away from assimilationist policies of media of instruction towards a greater recognition of the multilingual nature of Australian society (Clyne, 1991:213).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The term community language has assumed a rather technical meaning in Australia, designating those languages which are usually classified as foreign, migrant, or ethnic languages (Clyne, 1991:3). However, the manner in which these languages are handled in the curriculum, resemble the principle of community language teaching elsewhere.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Clyne (*op. cit.*:213-246) for the unfurling of language policy in Australia.

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Australian language in education policies are mainly determined by the different federal states. Recent state policies with regard to language have been influenced by the Lo Bianco Report of 1986.<sup>24</sup> As far as the position of languages in the curriculum are concerned, the report makes two recommendations (Clyne, op. cit.:228):

- That all languages be mainstreamed and that the relation between these languages and English be a complementary one;
- That each state determines its own priorities, based upon its ethnolinguistic composition and geographic position. Western Australia and the Northern Territory, therefore need to consider their proximity to neighbouring countries, for example, Indonesia.

As an example of how languages in the curriculum are handled, subsequent to the Lo Bianco Report, the situation in South Australia may be briefly considered. This state has set itself the following goals:

- The development of the mother tongue of children of non-English origins in primary school;
- Second language learning opportunities in Grades 4 to 7. The proficiency level aimed at is very modest, namely 'the minimum measurable level of language proficiency';
- Community language 'mother tongue' development at secondary school;
- Further mother tongue development at secondary school. The aim is to develop a language proficiency that is commensurate with that of pupils of the same age and level in the country of origin.

It is not clear from Clyne's (op. cit.) description what is meant by mother tongue development and second language learning opportunities. Does he imply by 'mother tongue development' instruction in the mother tongue or instruction through the medium of the mother tongue? Similarly, does 'second language learning opportunities' refer to the development of English as a second language, or perhaps another language? One would expect though, in light of the first recommendation of the Lo Bianco Report, that mother tongue development

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<sup>24</sup> This report is often referred to as the *National Policy on Languages* (Clyne, op. cit.:227).

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may well include instruction through the medium of the mother tongue, as is indeed the situation in some Victoria schools (Clyne, op. cit.:128).

What is, however, clear from the Australian experience, is that media of instruction policies, whether they allow for instruction in the mother tongue or through the medium of the mother tongue, are clearly aimed at language maintenance.

It remains a moot question whether the model of community language teaching can be transplanted to South Africa. What the model emphasises is the need to develop mother tongue language maintenance programmes at school level.

Snow (1990) lists four reasons why mother tongue instruction is important in the bilingual curriculum:

- A close relationship exists between a child's language and his/her social-cultural identity. If language teaching ignores this bond, then language achievement may be detrimentally affected;
- There is evidence to suggest that children growing up in a bilingual environment, that is, pupils receiving instruction in the home language and in a second language, have superior cognitive skills, specially where metalinguistic awareness is concerned. These children find it easier, for example, to analyse the form and content of language, and have better control over the non-literal uses of language such as irony and figures of speech;
- Instruction in the mother tongue often enables students to transfer skills acquired through the first language to second language acquisition. These skills entail the ability to organise paragraphs, to develop an argument, and to define concepts; and
- Home language instruction may lead to enhanced academic achievement in the second language.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Danesi (1991), for example, has cited three interpretive frames which may be used to explain why heritage (or community) language teaching benefits second language acquisition. The first frame, interdependence, states that L1 and L2 are cooperative systems in the child's linguistic and cognitive development. Therefore, the L1 tends to enhance second language acquisition, rather than retard or damage it. The second frame, narrativity, contends that children having access to two different mental narrative schemes (L1 and L2) are able to process new information through both systems, which may lead to an improved diversification of their cognitive abilities. The third, namely cognitive enhancement, suggests that cognitive processes are influenced by language, and that the

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Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989:455) view mother tongue instruction as a fundamental linguistic human right which may be used to combat linguicism, which they define as

ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language.

### 4.3 A Proposed Model for Multilingual Instruction in South Africa

One of the aims mentioned under 1.2 was to propose a model for multilingual instruction. This section now attempts to accomplish that aim.

This study has thus far investigated some of the central themes pertaining to past and present South African language policy (Chapter 2), language planning issues in South Africa (Chapter 3), and how media of instruction are implemented in multilingual societies (Chapter 4).

An attempt will now be made to incorporate some of the conclusions drawn in previous chapters in a proposed model for multilingual instruction in South Africa. This model must make provision for multilingualism as prescribed by the Constitution (2.4.1) and the *Discussion Document* (1995) of the Department of Education (3.3.5.2), and regional application of language policy (2.4.3 and 3.3.5.1). Furthermore, it seems imperative that any model for multilingual instruction should also take into consideration the language aims of the PSALB (3.3.5.3).

The discussion of the European bilingual school movement (4.2.4) clearly showed how media of instruction were manipulated to attain certain societal goals such as integration. It seems as if the present debate has brought to the fore three societal goals which may be worthwhile to pursue in media of instruction policies for South Africa. They are multi-

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presence of two languages may enhance the functioning of these processes.

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lingualism and multiculturalism (cf. 2.4.1), Alexander's (1989) emphasis on nation-building (cf. 3.3.4.1.1), and the need to provide access to English (cf. 3.3.4.1.3).

Multilingualism can only be advanced if the language curriculum provides for both language maintenance and bilingual/multilingual programmes. The language curriculum at school should ideally consider both the official language policy in the province and the micro-linguistic context in which a school operates. The NEPI report (1994) has, for example, shown that in the past there were sufficient concentrations of Southern Sotho-speakers in the Western Cape to warrant the teaching of that language at primary school. It is imperative that our schools become responsive to the language needs of communities.

South African schools are, due to the history of racial segregation, largely ethnic islands within a multicultural country. To facilitate nation-building, and to eradicate racial prejudice, schools have to be integrated in such a manner that the students of different ethnic backgrounds do not lose their sense of cultural identity. This goal may be achieved by considering the integrationist approach of the European Bilingual School Network. Depending on the linguistic make-up of the community in question, a number of language blocks may be identified within the same school. Pupils would then have the opportunity of receiving mother tongue instruction within the language of their choice for the duration of the primary school years. Although the choice of a language block should rest with parents and pupils, experience of bilingual contexts has shown that a child's mother tongue is not necessarily his/her dominant language. A major problem associated with bilingual education is, therefore, to develop assessment instruments for placing pupils in appropriate programmes (cf. 5.3.2). This approach also makes it possible to create a rich linguistic environment in both the classroom and the playground, from which peers may draw upon to acquire native-like proficiency in a second language (cf. 4.2.4.2 and 4.2.4.3).

Furthermore, this model offers students the full benefit of bilingual or trilingual education, and for African pupils access to English. The following considerations have played a role in designing this model:

- The model should be multilingual (cf. 2.4.1 and 3.3.5.2);
- It should be implementable at regional level (cf. 2.4.3 and 3.3.5.1);
- Emphasis of initial mother tongue-based education during the primary school years. Research has indicated that enhanced mother tongue instruction is crucial

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- for cognitive development in the second language (cf. Danesi, 1991, in footnote 25);
- Sufficient preparation in a second language for a smooth transition to that new medium of instruction;
  - The model must provide sufficient access to English;
  - The incorporation of language enrichment programmes similar to those in Canadian immersion (cf. 4.2.3); and
  - Proper language maintenance programmes (cf. 4.2.4 and subsuming sections) to enhance pupil self-esteem (cf. the advantages associated with community language teaching in 4.2.5), and to improve language status.

Based, therefore, on the discussion of the above principles, one may conclude that it would be best for students to receive instruction through their home language for the duration of the primary school years. At present this means seven years of instruction which compares favourably with the five years of the Foyer model. Second language instruction in preparation for a transfer to a new medium of instruction in secondary school may begin in the third year (Std 1) (cf. the way in which mother tongue instruction is dealt with within the Foyer Model, 4.2.4.3). To facilitate the smooth change-over to a new medium, mathematics may be taught through the second language from Std 3 (cf. the conclusion reached in this regard under 4.2.4.4). Another subject for teaching through the second language may be considered in Std 4 or 5. From Std 6 onwards all content subject teaching should be done through the second language. One apparent reason for the success of Canadian immersion and the European bilingual/trilingual schools, is the ample opportunity they provide for language learning across the curriculum. The choice of the second language should be left entirely to pupils and their parents. First language maintenance programmes must be on offer at secondary school level (cf. the above principles). It clearly follows from the above that no provision is made for mother tongue instruction at secondary school, except for as a subject. This is done to create optimal opportunity to increase proficiency in the second language whilst maintaining the mother tongue through teaching it as a subject only.

A third language can be introduced in Std 2 and taught until the end of matric. Such a third language course should perhaps be made compulsory to ensure equity in the number of the languages which need to be learned, and to cultivate an understanding for multilingualism and multiculturalism.

As an example of how multilingual language teaching may be implemented in schools, one may structure the teaching of Afrikaans, English, and Sesotho sa Leboa in parts<sup>26</sup> of the Northern Province, for instance, as follows:

**Language Block: Afrikaans**

<b>Primary school</b>	<b>Secondary school</b>
Afrikaans (L1)	English (L1)
English (L2)	Afrikaans (maintenance programme)
Sesotho sa Leboa (L3)	Sesotho sa Leboa (L3)

**Language Block: English**

<b>Primary school</b>	<b>Secondary school</b>
English (L1)	Afrikaans (L1)
Afrikaans (L2)	English (maintenance programme)
Sesotho sa Leboa (L3)	Sesotho sa Leboa (L3)

**Language Block: Sesotho sa Leboa**

<b>Primary School</b>	<b>Secondary school</b>
Sesotho sa Leboa (L1)	English (L1)
English (L2)	Sesotho sa Leboa (maintenance programme)
Afrikaans (L3)	Afrikaans (L3)

<sup>26</sup> The regional approach adopted in 3.3.5.1 would allow for other languages to be taken in other districts (for example, in the former Venda and Gazankulu).

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This proposal is more equitable than Alexander's (1989; cf. 3.3.4.1.1), because it requires all children to study three languages. It will also have the effect of enhancing the prestige of the African languages in the way purported by Skutnabb-Kangas (1977). She asserts in this respect that only mother tongue teaching will increase the prestige of a language. She (op. cit.:196), therefore, writes:

(A) language which is not used as a medium of instruction, seldom gains the same prestige as school languages. If the minority group is economically suppressed, as it often is compared to the majority group, the children's mother tongue needs more overt prestige to be valued and learned by the children.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The models of bilingual and trilingual education investigated in this chapter clearly show how media of instruction policies are tailored to attain specific societal goals. Therefore, in submersion and transitional education where the societal goal is assimilation instruction is given through the medium of a second language. However, when the goals are language enrichment (French immersion) or language maintenance (European School Network and community language teaching), the importance of mother tongue instruction increases exponentially.

Furthermore, evidence gathered from evaluations of the various models suggests that there is a better correlation between academic achievement and those models of bilingual and trilingual education which do not devalue the importance of the mother tongue.

This conclusion seems to have special implications for a multilingual country such as South Africa. Academic achievement, it appears, is not adversely affected by second language medium of instruction. The converse seems to be true also: academic achievement could be adversely affected by educational programmes which explicitly or implicitly imply a devaluation of the home language.

Based on the models of bilingual and trilingual education, and in achieving the second aim mentioned under 1.2, it is, therefore, proposed that South African schools implement a programme of multilingual education whereby instruction is offered in at least two of the lan-

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guages recognised by a province as official.

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses three implications which multilingualism has on the teaching of language. These centre around the questions of which language/dialect to teach, how to assess students' language in multilingual settings, and which aspects of language teaching should be emphasised in teacher training.

The complexity of these issues will not be discussed here because each of the sections is prefaced with an introductory paragraph elucidating the prevailing issues surrounding them.

## 5.2 Which Language/Dialect to Teach?

### 5.2.1 Introduction

A fundamental aspect of language teaching in multilingual settings relates to the question whether one should teach a standard or non-standard variety of a language.

In Chapter 4 it was shown that there is a general tendency in language maintenance programmes to give more recognition to a child's mother tongue as medium of instruction, especially during the first formative years. This tendency and the work done by Labov (1977a) on Black English Vernacular (BEV), a non-standard variety of American English, have prompted some scholars to argue in favour of non-standard varieties as media of instruction (Trudgill, 1975; Stubbs, 1976).

Schools have traditionally favoured standardised varieties as media of instruction. Consequently, dialectal differences have been viewed as substandard forms which should be strongly discouraged and ultimately be eradicated. Schools have, therefore, attempted to *replace* the non-standard dialect of the child with a standard variety (Edwards, 1985:132-135). These views about non-standard dialects and how to manage them have become so ingrained in mainstream schools that speakers of non-standard varieties have come to accept them as valid (*ibid.*).

Related to accepted language use at school is the apparent connection between social status and educational achievement. Educational research points to a strong correlation between social status and educational attainment at school. Middle-class children perform, generally speaking, better than working-class children at school (Trudgill, *op. cit.*; Stubbs, *op. cit.*; Labov, *op. cit.*). Furthermore, middle-class children are more likely to speak a standard variety than working-class children (Trudgill, 1975:59). South African educational experiences appear to substantiate the views of Trudgill (*op. cit.*), Stubbs (*op. cit.*), and Labov (*op. cit.*). Children of White South Africans, who enjoy a higher per capita income than Africans, outperform African children. Furthermore, African children from the Northern Province, one of the poorest of all South African provinces, perform worse than African children from other provinces.

The differences in educational attainment of working-class children versus that of middle-class children are commonly ascribed to linguistic differences. It has, therefore, been argued that the lower educational achievement of working-class children is due to verbal deficiencies inherent in the non-standard varieties they speak (cf. Gordon, 1981 and 5.2.2 for an explication of verbal deficiency theories). Some scholars have, however, recently argued that linguistic differences may not be the sole reason why working-class pupils fail at school (Trudgill, *op. cit.*; Stubbs, *op. cit.*).

The main question to be addressed in this subsection is: should schools teach language through the medium of a standard or non-standard variety? This question may clearly be subdivided into the following questions:

- Is the speech of children speaking a non-standard dialect verbally deficient?
- Do children fail at school mainly because of linguistic reasons?
- How should schools handle dialectal diversity among the pupil population?
- Should schools use a standardised version as medium of instruction?

### **5.2.2 Are speakers of non-standard varieties verbally deficient?**

Verbal deficit theories seek to explain why social groups of different languages and cultures perform dissimilarly at school (Stubbs, 1976:78; Labov, 1977a:201; Gordon, 1981:20). The differences in performance are then attributed to presumed verbal deficits.

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Gordon (1981:60) defines a verbal deficit theory as

any hypothesis that (i) seeks to explain differential educational attainment to any significant degree in terms of the intrinsic nature of two fundamentally different varieties of language used by schoolchildren, both at the commencement of their school careers and subsequently; and (ii) seeks to explain the unequal social distribution of educational attainment in terms of which social groups are deemed to speak one of the two varieties rather than the other.

Gordon's (op. cit.) definition has one obvious weakness, namely, that verbal deficit theories are limited to varieties of the same language. However, medium of instruction policies which seek to belittle the pedagogic value of the mother tongue also presume that the child's mother tongue is deficient in some ways and, therefore, not suitable as medium of instruction (Williams and Snipper, 1990:54). Many Africans in South Africa, for example, subscribe to the notion that their mother tongue is inferior and inadequate as a medium of instruction when compared to English (Reagan, 1985; Reagan, 1986b).

According to Gordon (1981:59-60) classical deficit theory presupposes the following:

- That speech falls into two categories, namely, a high and low variety, and that the former is superior to the latter;
- That both varieties are recognisable intuitively or through IQ tests;
- That the high variety is spoken by pupils who are successful at school, while the majority of unsuccessful students speak the low variety; and,
- That the high variety possesses the necessary potential for cognitive development and thus academic success, while the low variety lacks this potential and, therefore, leads to failure.

Labov (op. cit.) highlights some of the speech characteristics often associated with so-called verbally deficit children.<sup>1</sup> These are:

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<sup>1</sup> Labov's (op. cit.) study concerns the differences between Standard English and Black English Vernacular (BEV), a variety spoken by Afro-Americans in the United States of America.

- Poor verbality which manifests itself in monosyllabic behaviour often considered the result of inadequate verbal stimulation at home;
- Incomplete (cf. the omission of the copula, the use of elliptical answers) and ungrammatical (cf. the use of the object pronoun *me* as subject of the verb) sentences;
- An incapacity for expressing logic statements. Speakers of Standard English, for example, interpret the expression *He don't know nothing* in BEV to mean *He knows something*.

Labov (op. cit.) painstakingly dispels the notion that speakers of BEV are verbally deficit by showing that:

- They are capable of employing a rich vocabulary in their speech. Asymmetrical power relations between teacher and pupil, however, are the major causes why Afro-American pupils are often regarded as verbally deficit;
- Incomplete sentences and elliptical answers are not only characteristic of BEV, but also of Standard English;
- BEV is not an aberrant version of Standard English, but is characterised by its own distinctive rules. The difference, for example, between *He don't know nothing* (BEV) and *He doesn't know anything/nothing* (Standard English) is only a different surface realisation of the same deep structure.

Verbal deficit theory, therefore, clearly assumes that a strong causal link exists between educational failure and the language of the pupil. It is precisely this presumption which casts doubts over the theory because this causal relationship has never been proven (Stubbs, 1976: 85 and 140). In fact, there are no *linguistic reasons* why a non-standard variety cannot be used as medium of instruction (Trudgill, 1975:102; Stubbs, 1976:72; Edwards, 1985:133).

### 5.2.3 Do pupils fail at school because of their language?

Trudgill (1975:65) contends that the educational failure of speakers of non-standard varieties can only be attributed to language if the demand made by the school on the child is that of Standard English.

Stubbs (1976:140) argues convincingly that it is erroneous to relate linguistic issues (for example, the dialect of the child) directly to non-linguistic ones (for instance, educational achievement). A more proper approach would be to investigate how linguistic items function in sociolinguistic systems (for example, the use of language in various social contexts). He thus asserts that 'it is more useful to talk about sociolinguistic barriers between schools and pupils' than to talk about pupils' linguistic failure (Stubbs, *op. cit.*:147).

What are then the 'sociolinguistic barriers' between pupil and school? The first obvious barrier is that a school may reward pupils, especially in writing, for using Standard English forms, and conversely, penalise them for using non-standard forms (Trudgill, *op. cit.*:59-60). The second barrier are the attitudes of both teachers and pupils to language. Trudgill (*op. cit.*:60-63) and Stubbs (*op. cit.*:86), for example, show how teachers who have a predilection towards high varieties may overtly or covertly discriminate against pupils speaking low varieties. The pupils, by contrast, are often caught in a double bind: realising that the teacher's speech has authoritative sanction they may wish to adopt the dialect of the teacher, but in doing so, they risk alienation from their peers (Stubbs, *op. cit.*:86).<sup>2</sup> Pupils may, however, also react negatively towards the teacher's speech by regarding it as 'snobbish' or 'stilted' (cf. Trudgill, *op. cit.*:61).

It is thus clear that pupils often fail at school, not because they speak a non-standard dialect or because their dialect is insufficient due to the cognitive demands by the school on language, but because teachers and pupils are both ignorant of each others' dialect and because of their attitudes towards language (Labov, 1977a:239).

#### **5.2.4 How should schools handle dialectal diversity among the pupil population?**

The traditional way in which schools usually handle dialectal diversity is to replace the non-standard variety of the pupil with a standard. This approach of eliminating a child's dialect is particularly dangerous because (Trudgill, 1975:65-68):

- The practice has been a demonstrable failure;

<sup>2</sup> For the importance of dialect in peer group identity cf. Trudgill (1975:66ff.)

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- Most people, especially children, do not want to change their dialect because it is an expression of their social identity;
  - It may advance illiteracy. If people are constantly told that their dialect is 'inferior', and Standard English is propagated as the ultimate goal to be achieved, then people may reject anything associated with Standard English and, therefore, reading; and
  - It creates a sense of linguistic insecurity in the child. A consequence is that the child usually refuses to speak at all because (s)he is afraid to reveal his/her inability to master the language.

Educationists in the United States of America attempted to eradicate non-standard varieties through compensatory education programs such as Project Head Start and Upward Bound. These programmes are remedial programmes aimed at rectifying deficient speech patterns. The former, launched in 1965, was a preschool programme which attempted to equip verbally deficient children with certain minimum linguistic and cognitive skills. The latter was aimed at rehabilitating the speech of disadvantaged-first year college entrants so that colleges would not need to lower entrance requirements (Fantini, 1972:16-19; Gordon, 1981:90-92).

Stubbs (1976:78) asserts that these compensatory programmes failed because they aimed to cure deficits that were never there. Gordon (op. cit.:90-92; 126-127) provides a more balanced evaluation of the Head Start programmes. His main criticisms centre around the following:

- The Head Start initiative comprised a multiplicity of programmes. Criteria for assessing the programmes' success or failure were problematic since their inception. Educational psychologists, rather than conducting comparative longitudinal studies involving research and control groups, tended to investigate whether the programmes led to an increase in the IQ of Head Start children;
- The linguistic content and the behaviourist methodology of the programmes were devised by psychologists who were ignorant of the interdisciplinary nature of the project, and who rarely sought input from linguists. This resulted in 'folk-linguistic assumptions' (ibid.) that failure at school was due to some language deficiency evident in the child.
- Many components of the Head Start project were devised on an *ad hoc* basis in a panic-stricken atmosphere. These programmes were initiated during a period

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when the African population of the USA was seized by a sense of growing alienation from central American values. Sporadic civil unrest during the early 1960s added a new urgency that something had to be done to stem this process of alienation. In this sense the Head Start programmes represented another attempt to assimilate borderline linguistic communities into mainstream society.

The debate about how to handle dialectal diversity judiciously in educational matters has foregrounded three approaches.

Trudgill (op. cit.), having carefully considered the role of accents and dialects in schools, propounds a policy of linguistic and dialectal tolerance and pleads for the elimination of dialectal prejudice on part of the teacher, school, and pupils. Although Trudgill's (op. cit.) proposals for linguistic and dialectal tolerance may not solve the thorny issue of social inequality caused by dialectal differences, they may (Gordon, op. cit.:105):

- Save schools from wasting time and resources on compensatory programmes;
- Enhance the self-esteem of pupils speaking non-standard forms;
- Expose a particular harmful criterion, namely that of not using 'good English', used to stereotype children;
- Challenge people openly who judge others on the bias of their speech; and
- Offer windows of opportunities to address other mechanisms of stereotyping people.

In the wake of the emergence of bilingual education, and the realisation that many people have a communicative command in two dialects or more, some scholars are advocating an additive bidialectal approach to language teaching (Allen, 1972; Galvan and Troike, 1972; Stewart, 1972; Troike, 1972; Trudgill, op. cit.:68; Labov, 1977b:3-35). In a bidialectal approach the teacher initially accepts the dialect of the pupil; during this phase (s)he fosters and encourages communication by making full use of the pupil's culture. Only in the subsequent phase does the teacher introduce the student to the conventions of the standard dialect (Gordon, op. cit.:101).

The salient characteristics of bidialectal language teaching are exemplified by Stewart's (1972:271) approach to introduce Afro-American pupils to the conventions of Standard English of a sentence such as *Charles an' Michael, dey out playin.*

**Stage 1:**

*Charles and Michael, they out playing.*

In the first stage the pupil is initiated into only the orthographic conventions of Standard English so that (s)he may learn the vocabulary. Problems relating to pronunciation and grammatical features (double subject and omission of the copula) are left to the later stages.

**Stage 2:**

*Charles and Michael, they are out playing.*

In the second stage is the student is taught the basic rubrics of person accord of the copula, and the pronunciation of some Standard English lexical items.

**Stage 3:**

*Charles and Michael are out playing.*

Only in the third stage is the pupil introduced to all the conventions of Standard English (vocabulary, and the elimination of the double subject).

Despite evidence that a broad consensus (cf. the above references) is developing around bidialectal language teaching offering practical solutions to the very complicated issue of language and dialects in education, some people are not convinced of its merits (Gordon, op. cit.:100-111; Hamers and Blanc, 1989:209-211). Gordon (ibid.) argues that, since most people have access to radio and television and, therefore, to a standard dialect, the learning of the latter should be a matter of personal choice and not of educational prescription. Gordon's (ibid.) stated fear that bidialectal teaching would be rejected because it might be interpreted as an attempt to eradicate non-standard dialects, is certainly not a sufficient reason to abandon the approach, because pupils' reaction to it will surely depend on the teacher's ability to valorise the non-standard variety in his/her teaching. Though it is obvious that Hamers and Blanc (ibid.) are sceptical of bidialectal language teaching, it is not clear whether their principal objections are directed against bidialectalism *per se* or against what they regard as other manifestations of bidialectal teaching, namely compensatory programmes and attempts to

eradicate prejudices against non-standard varieties. They plainly concede that should the child's dialect be valorised bidialectal teaching may be effective.

Stubbs (1976:87) asserts that the argument over standard and non-standard varieties in education is circular, because it always foregrounds the question about the nature of the linguistic demand made by the school on the pupil. Stubbs (op. cit.:134), therefore, proposes that linguistic data obtained from actual classroom language be used as "'indicators', 'markers' or 'indices' of learning and teaching processes." <sup>3</sup>

### 5.2.5 Should schools use a standard version as medium of instruction?

The term standard variety or standard dialect has, until now, been employed without any attempt at operationalisation. A standard language is, as Holmes (1992:83) has pointed out, a slippery notion. A standard is usually associated with the *written form* of a language which has undergone some degree of *codification* (especially as far as the grammar and vocabulary are concerned) and is recognised as a *prestigious form* of a language by a community (ibid.). This definition is important because it relates this concept to the written form and not the spoken language. The term, therefore, does not prescribe any conventions as far as pronunciation is concerned (Quirk, 1968; Titlestad, 1994:2-3).

It is clear from 5.2.1 that the use of a standard dialect as a medium of instruction in multilingual contexts is a highly contentious issue (cf. Trudgill, 1975; Stubbs, 1976). The reasons for and against a standard language in education need closer investigation.

It appears that those in favour of non-standard varieties as languages in education argue that the latter are wholly sufficient as media of instruction, because speech differences between dialects are socially determined and are non-cognitive by nature. Therefore, each dialect is

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<sup>3</sup> Stubbs (op. cit.:140) establishes three criteria for studies of language in education: firstly, they must be based upon naturalistic observation; secondly, they must make the social meanings conveyed by language explicit as well as people's attitudes towards them, and, thirdly, the linguistic data thus obtained must be related to sociolinguistic behaviour in other, non-classroom settings.

capable of conveying the same semantic information, albeit through different styles and registers.<sup>4</sup>

Kachru (1965 and 1976) too, seems to argue in favour of non-standard varieties as instructional media. Standard and non-standard varieties, according to Kachru (1965), may be fixed on a 'cline of bilingualism'.<sup>5</sup> It appears that Kachru (1976) leans towards the basilect as medium of instruction.<sup>6</sup>

The main weakness of Kachru's (op. cit.) view is that it largely negates the twin problems of children being stereotyped and discriminated against on the basis of their dialect (cf. Gordon, 1981).

A far greater awareness of these problems may be found in Trudgill (1975). Trudgill (op. cit.:71-81) who examines eight prevalent reasons why Standard English ought to be taught, finally concludes that, because children may be discriminated against in the business world for using a non-standard variety in writing, only the conventions of written Standard English require any teaching (and then by using the bidialectal method). Although he concurs that there are prevailing social prejudices against non-standard varieties, and that the teaching of spoken Standard English may be a legitimate enterprise, he, however, considers this a waste of time, and a practice which may engender more feelings of linguistic insecurity and alienation in speakers of stigmatised varieties.

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<sup>4</sup> This proposition is known as the linguistic variability hypothesis. For a discussion of this hypothesis compare Gordon (1981:92-111). The work of Labov (1977a) was conceived in the same spirit (Gordon, op. cit.:96). The main weakness of this hypothesis is that it presupposes that the differences between dialects can be quantified. However, no such yardstick on which such quantifications can be based exists (ibid.).

<sup>5</sup> The 'cline of bilingualism' (Kachru, op. cit.) represents a continuum of English usage with the acrolect (near international standard) at the one end and the basilect (an extreme, non-standard variety) at the other end.

<sup>6</sup> Kachru (1976:228), reflecting on the use of non-native varieties of English in education, says that 'in language learning, it is not only appropriate but crucial to relate the model of language to the attitudes and reactions of the actual learner. One wonders how sensible it is to present a speaker of RP as a model of spoken English to a class full of Black students in America, or a Midwestern speaker in a junior college in a village in India'.

It is precisely the prevalence of a linguistic discrimination that has led Labov (1977b:7) to propose the teaching of Standard English *and* standard pronunciation.<sup>7</sup> Titlestad (1994) emphasises that South Africa's need for a language of communication internally and internationally, a need which English can best fulfil, requires a variety close to Standard English. The rationale submitted by Titlestad (op. cit.) is often argued for under the notion of intelligibility (cf. Widdowson, 1993:379ff). Trudgill (op. cit.:71) who also discusses this idea, but under the headings *hearing and understanding, reading, speaking, and writing*, dismisses it because

dialect differences in British schools do not constitute an educational problem *unless* Standard English is required of children who have some non-standard variety as their native dialect (Trudgill's italics).

While intelligibility may not be reason enough to teach Standard English in the British school system, it is clearly a factor worth considering in the South African context. Lanham (1984:333), for example, reports that, because of *apartheid* policies, the quality of Black English has deteriorated to such an extent that

(I)n black-white interaction, the intelligibility of Black English to whites and the comprehensibility of South African English to blacks poses problems.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Labov (1977b:5) suggests that a teacher prioritise teaching certain capacities of Standard English. They are: (a) ability to understand spoken English (of the teacher); (b) ability to read and comprehend; (c) ability to communicate (to the teacher) in spoken English; (d) ability to communicate in writing; (e) ability to write in standard English grammar; (f) ability to spell correctly; (g) ability to use standard English grammar in speaking; (h) ability to speak with a prestige pattern of pronunciation (and avoid stigmatized forms.).

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that the unintelligibility of Black English (to Whites) is due to both grammar problems (cf. Titlestad, op. cit.:9) and problems related to pronunciation. Lanham (1978:342), for example, name four characteristics of Black English pronunciation: (i) a lack of contrast between long and short vowels (*tick* and *teak* are, therefore, pronounced identically); (ii) the schwa vocoid is missing (*bird* and *bed* have, therefore, similar pronunciation values, and *teacher* is pronounced as /ti:t a/); (iii) the contrast between /e/ in *fed* and /æ/ in *fat* is lost; and (iv) words are often erroneously accented.

It is not only Black English that poses problems in the South African context, but also Afrikaans English.<sup>9</sup> Although Lanham (1984:337) states that a high percentage of Afrikaners have obtained high levels of competence in English, the stigmatised English of lower educated, government-employed Afrikaners often provoke the ire of White, mother tongue speakers of English.

The vast difference between the position and composition of English in the British Isles and in South Africa provides the most compelling reason why Standard English ought to be taught in South African schools. Standard English in Britain, an idealised dialect operating within in a network of other dialects, is spoken by a relatively small percentage of people (Trudgill, op. cit.:46). The situation in South Africa, however, is totally different: schools have, probably because English is mainly taught as a second language, focused on Standard English. The consequence of this has been that the English of a substantial number of Indians, Coloureds, and Afrikaners is approximating conservative South African English (Lanham, 1984).<sup>10</sup> A network of English dialects is thus largely lacking. Titlestad (op. cit.) is, therefore, correct in asserting that what is available in South Africa, is Standard English.

Widdowson (op. cit.) recently emphasised that extending global networks of information and telecommunications would engender a natural process towards increased standardisation and maintenance of the common code. This process develops endo-normatively according to different conditions of usage (Widdowson, op. cit.) and ensures that there will be many standards, for example, British, American, South African and so on (cf. Quirk, 1968).

The chief reason why Standard South African English should be taught, namely to escape stigmatisation and discrimination, is reason enough why schools should teach a standard variety of Afrikaans and of African languages. The stigmatised value of especially *Kaapse Afrikaans* has been pointed out by Reagan (1986b) and Ponelis (1987). Non-standard stig-

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<sup>9</sup> Coloured English, according to Lanham (1984), is frequently paired with Afrikaans English because of their obvious affinity to each other.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between conservative South African English and Received Standard, a sociolect resembling standard British English, see Lanham (1978:146ff.)

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matised varieties are also found in the African languages. An example of the latter is Sepedi, a dialect of Sesotho sa Leboa spoken in Sekhukune land. The meaning of Sekhukune ('the thing that crouches') may be suggestive of the dialect's derogatory status (personal communication by a colleague, Mr Welcome Sekwati).<sup>11</sup>

The choice between standard and non-standard varieties as media of instruction in the African languages and in Afrikaans is complicated by linguistic and non-linguistic factors (cf. 3.3.4.1.1 and 3.3.4.1.2). In 5.2.4 it was argued that a bidialectal method could be used to effect the transition from a non-standard to a standard variety.<sup>12</sup> However, this method is likely to be impractical for teaching bidialectalism in African languages because not all dialects have been described linguistically, nor are the relations between the different dialects known (3.3.4.1.1). These two problems attending African languages, and the need of some standard for assessment purposes, make it impossible to accept the child's own non-standard dialect in the language classroom. Practical reasons, therefore, dictate that teachers must use a standard dialect. The situation in the African language classroom obviously calls for a teacher to manage dialect diversity with sensitivity and empathy.

One can also expect that persistent calls for a more democratic approach to language standardisation in Afrikaans may eventually lead to a more inclusive form of Standard Afrikaans and, thus, remove the most important obstacle to teaching Standard Afrikaans (cf. 3.3.4.1.2). Afrikaans is also in the fortunate position that extensive dialectal descriptions provide, in principle, the basis from which bidialectal language courses may be developed.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Speakers of Sesotho sa Leboa disagree as to the correct pronunciation of the region's name. Some prefer the pronunciation *Sekhukuni* over *Sekhukune*. The etymology of *Sekhukuni* is obscure (*ibid.*).

<sup>12</sup> The transition from a non-standard to standard variety may best be brought about during primary school years (cf. 4.3).

<sup>13</sup> Compare, for example, the dialectal descriptions offered by Ponelis (1987).

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### 5.3 Assessment Instruments

#### 5.3.1 Introduction

Assessment in multilingual education foregrounds three important issues, namely the need for a new kind of assessment, various types of communicative language tests for multilingual contexts, and the content of these tests. Because communicative language tests aim to assess communicative competence, this concept and its content are explained under the heading **The Structure of Communicative Competence** (cf. 5.3.4).

#### 5.3.2 The Need for a New Kind of Assessment

The needs for proper assessment and assessment instruments in multilingual contexts are legion.

Language assessment practices in South Africa, even to this day, reflect largely the dominant ideology of the past, namely that of official bilingualism in Afrikaans and English. It seems certain that the linguistic and cultural biases inherent in these assessment practices have impeded the success of other cultural groups in the educational system (cf. Kalantzis *et al*, 1990:197). Assessment instruments must, therefore, be developed which will recognise and be sensitive to students with dissimilar linguistic backgrounds.

A major debate in multilingual assessment is how to balance attempts at unifying and harmonising diverse cultural and linguistic entities against the legitimate need to acknowledge those differences (Kalantzis *et al*, op. cit.). On the one hand, there is the danger that, should one over-individualise assessment, one may overlook the powerful roles a language fulfils in society. On the other hand, an equally ominous danger looms should one accede to the natural tendency of strong languages to dominate others, which would certainly result in monolingualism. The answer to this vexing problem is to establish, as objectively as possible, the role(s) of the various languages, and then to tailor assessment procedures accordingly.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kalantzis *et al* (op. cit.) offer a description of assessment procedures for English, Macedonian, and German. Their analysis of Australia's multilingual context reveals that English is mainly used at school; Macedonian and German are chiefly employed at home and in community related contexts.

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Before considering the issue of achievement tests in multilingual education, one should first gather reliable information on pupils' language preference as well as post-school language demands from, for example, industry. Reliable information on a pupil's linguistic background is essential to construct placement tests if they were to receive instruction in their home language or dominant language. Should pupils be placed in a particular language group in primary school (cf. the conclusion about language groups or blocks in 4.3) which is not his/her dominant language, it could negatively influence educational attainment.

Assessing a child's home or dominant language is, however, far more complicated than it appears. The experience in the United States of America, for example, has shown that questionnaires are largely inadequate because children often fear victimisation should they provide factual information about their language preferences (Oller, 1979:76; cf. also Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981:194).<sup>15</sup>

The recognition of South Africa's multilingual heritage by the 1993 Constitution will undoubtedly lead to occupational language demands by industry. To satisfy these demands, multilingual assessment instruments will have to be developed which will be able to determine a person's language competency in the L1, and how this compares to his/her competence in the other required languages. Effective assessment instruments capable of measuring and comparing L1 and L2 language competencies are required not only because of future vocational demands, but also by the demands imposed by emerging multilingual educational system in this country. If all the recommendations of the Department of Education's *Discussion Document* (1995) are accepted, then clearly a rethink of current assessment procedures are urgently needed.

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<sup>15</sup> This problem also prevails in South Africa. Speakers of Venda and Tsonga often hide their ethnic origins in Soweto because of the accepted wisdom that they are lazy (private communication by colleagues at the University of the North).

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### 5.3.3 Language Testing in Multilingual Contexts<sup>16</sup>

The complexity of language tests in bilingual/multilingual education is clearly compounded by the various definitions of bilingualism (cf. Baker, 1993:4-17 for the numerous definitions of and distinctions within the concept bilingualism), and by a general confusion over what constitutes language proficiency, and, ironically, how to measure this conundrum (Hayes-Brown, 1984:49ff.).

Two sets of paired distinctions, which apply equally to all language tests, highlight some of the current issues in bilingual/multilingual assessment. They are norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced tests, and discrete-point testing versus integrative tests.

In 1963 Glaser (reprinted in Popham, 1971) distinguished between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. The former aims to compare a student's achievement with the scores of others. The latter, however, posit that language achievement may be likened to a 'continuum of knowledge acquisition ranging from no proficiency at all to perfect performance' (Glaser, 1971:7). Criterion-referenced tests are, therefore, especially suitable to determine whether an individual has mastered a particular skill sufficiently before continuing with the instructional programme.<sup>17</sup>

Popham (1971:78-85) names four weaknesses associated with norm-referenced tests:

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<sup>16</sup> A broad range of test types are presently available (cf. Hughs, 1989:9-14). This sections deals chiefly with the use of achievement tests in the language classroom. It is perhaps worth noting that, in the USA, most of the research into the suitability of tests in a multilingual environment deals with the development of proficiency test for placement in bilingual programmes (Skehan, 1991:19). The *raison d'etre* is presumably to satisfy the Lau Remedies (cf. 4.2.2).

<sup>17</sup> It is something of a conundrum that so many years after the publication of Glaser's (op. cit.) seminal article much of the testing in language classrooms remains norm-referenced testing. Skehan (1991) recently sounded a pessimistic note if there would ever be sufficient progress to implement criterion-referenced testing. The main obstacle impeding implementation is the difficulty in describing a multi-faceted notion such as language performance.

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- They produce mismatches between what has been taught and what has been tested;
  - They provide insufficient cues for instructional amelioration;
  - They often set a snare for the language tester, because with the on-going process of test revision, the important and most taught aspects of a course are frequently eliminated. What is left are usually the unimportant things; and
  - Norm-referenced tests show a high propensity for cultural bias.

The reason why norm-referenced tests are considered culturally biased, is because they provide data on norms and average performances of a standardised sample belonging to a particular cultural group (Lowden, 1984:100). Norm-referenced tests are, therefore, inappropriate assessment instruments in multilingual education because they do not provide a basis for extrapolating actual test scores to the greater student population. Criterion-referenced tests are frequently preferred in multilingual environments because

- the norms relative to a language group are difficult to establish, especially since classrooms are often made up of a small number of speakers from a specific language group; and
- they are excellently positioned to furnish information about the mastery of particular skills.

The debate about the appropriateness of norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests for bilingual or multilingual education goes beyond the need for *mere* culture-fair testing. The purpose of testing is all-important. If testing is considered, for example, only as a tool to facilitate the integration of various cultures into the proverbial 'melting-pot', then the need for culture-fair testing falls away, because one assumes that the values of minorities have to yield to those of the dominant culture. Should the aim of education be the preservation and maintenance of individual languages, then tests would have to be set with a particular minority in mind (cf. Lowden, *op. cit.*:99).

Realising this caveat, Oller (1979) exposes the foolishness of the contention that language testing should focus exclusively on learner abilities. Language, which is by its very nature social, implies norms. Therefore, the ideal in multilingual education would perhaps be to develop separate testing norms for each culture, and then to administer these tests to a

specific group. Such a suggestion, taking into account the diverse classroom situations one may encounter, is simply impractical. Consequently, notwithstanding all the advantages offered by criterion-referenced tests, language tests in multilingual environments should perhaps include both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. Further to this argument, Davies (1990:19) views the arguments around criterion and norm referencing as 'somewhat metaphysical'. What is needed, he says (Davies, *op. cit.*:18), is a criterion-referenced use of a norm-referenced test, that is, a test measuring specific abilities, but which does not discriminate too severely between testees.

The second contrasting pair deals with Carroll's (1961, reprinted in Bachman, 1990:300) acclaimed distinction between 'discrete-point' and 'integrative' testing. He writes in this regard:

I do not think, however, that language testing (or the specification of language proficiency) is complete without the use of ... an approach requiring an integrated, facile performance on the part of the examinee. It is conceivable that knowledge could exist without facility. If we limit ourselves to testing only one point at a time, more time is ordinarily allowed for reflection than would occur in a normal communication situation ... For this reason I recommend tests in which there is less attention paid to specific structure-points or lexicon than to the total communicative effect of an utterance ... Indeed, this 'integrative' approach has several advantages over the 'discrete-structure-point' approach.

Simply put, integrative tests involve the setting of tasks which simultaneously integrate and test the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) to assess communicative use of language, which entails negotiation of meaning.<sup>18</sup>

The concept of communicative language testing evolved from the definitions of criterion-referenced and integrative language testing. The literature on communicative language testing has become extremely extensive, and the problems associated with it almost

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<sup>18</sup> Oller (1979) considers 'cloze, dictation, translation, essay, and the oral interview' as examples of integrative tests.

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legion (cf. Morrow, 1979; Carroll, 1982; Harrison, 1983; Hart *et al*, 1987; Skehan, 1988; and Weir, 1988).

It appears that most language tests at school actually test *knowledge* of grammar, which is an example of discrete-point testing. Although the benefits of integrative language tests are ostensibly preferable because they test communicative language use, discrete-point tests may be useful in multilingual classrooms if the purpose is to *compare* a bilingual's language ability in a certain aspect of grammar to that of a monolingual (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981:207-208).

The concern of multilingual educationists over the past few years, however, have been to develop testing instruments which would identify those characteristics common to a bilingual, but distinctive from monolinguals. Consequently, different tests have been developed which tap into the bilingual code.<sup>19</sup> These test types depend on the purpose of the tester. Therefore, linguists measure interference, psychologists automatic functions<sup>20</sup>, sociologists the settings of bilingual language use, and educationists the range of bilingual repertoire. All of these endeavour to measure bilingual competence, whether directly or indirectly. Despite the extent of this research, Skutnabb-Kangas (*op. cit.*:210) asserts, few substantial results have emerged.

There is a tendency today to test communicative use of language utilising mainly 'real life' examples.<sup>21</sup> The danger of this method is that the kind of language tested may not always be appropriate to the cognitive and linguistic demands made by the curriculum (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas, *op. cit.*:220). Further to this Canale suggests (1983:14ff.) that in the past second language pedagogy placed too great an emphasis on language structure without much attention to

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Skutnabb-Kangas (*op. cit.*:210) for the difference between the so-called two-code theory and the bilingual code.

<sup>20</sup> These functions include the fluency of a speaker, flexibility, the pace of language switching, and extent of language dominance.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bachman (1990:308ff.) for a critical appraisal of the 'real life' approach to establish test authenticity. He contends (*ibid.*) that test authenticity can only be defined by means of an interactionist approach involving test taker, test task, and context. Cf. also in this regard Oller's (1979) notion of pragmatic tests.

communicative skills. However, a skill-based approach alone is also inappropriate, as empirical evidence suggests that there should be an integration of the two. Although the basic premise of Canale's argument appears sound, his pedagogical approach lapses into a false dichotomy between competence and performance (Skehan, 1988:214ff.). Bachman's (op. cit.) proposal of integrating skill and method seems superior (cf. 5.3.4).

Substantial progress has been made over the years in identifying suitable assessment instruments which may be used in bilingual and multilingual education. Some of them are:

- The oral interview which comprises a wide range of approaches. It should be noted that this instrument has been developed primarily to elicit speech from a pupil, and to measure a pupil's language comprehension (Valette, 1977:314-316; Oller, 1979:303-339; Weir, 1988:82-92; Perrett, 1990);<sup>22</sup>
- Oral elicitation techniques (Oller, op. cit.:262-302);
- Group tests which are frequently used to assess listening comprehension (Valette, op. cit.:317);
- Collaborative assessment techniques involving people other than teachers, or a body of teachers (Brindley, 1991:163-164; Mohan & Low, 1995); and
- Self-assessment strategies incorporating portfolio assessment techniques (Smolen *et al*, 1995).<sup>23</sup>

#### 5.3.4 The Structure of Communicative Competence

Under 5.3.3 the usefulness of criterion-referenced and integrative language tests in assessing what a pupil can *do* with language (that is, his/her language competence), was dis-

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<sup>22</sup> Perrett (op. cit.) concludes in her study that the oral interview is not suitable to assess a pupils's ability to control conversation, to produce topic-initiations, or to ensure the continuance of the discourse.

<sup>23</sup> A number of these testing instruments are also known as alternative assessment procedures. Naturally, these techniques have raised questions about their validity, reliability, and objectivity. These issues are addressed by Huerta-Marcías (1995).

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cussed. An attempt to define this concept of communicative competence, and thus the content of communicative language tests, is presented here.

Chomsky (1972) differentiates between language competence and language performance. The former specifies the linguistic system an idealised speaker has internalised, whereas the latter is concerned with factors involved in the production of speech. In contrast to Chomsky (op. cit.), who limits competence to knowledge about the grammar of a language, Hymes (1972) argues that the form of language cannot be divorced from the social context in which it is being used; he, therefore, suggests the term communicative competence to include not only grammatical competence (knowledge of grammar), but also sociolinguistic competence (knowledge about language use). Communicative competence comprises knowledge and abilities of (Hymes, op. cit.:281):

- Whether something is formally *possible*;
- Whether something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
- Whether something is *appropriate* in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
- Whether something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails.

Paulston (1992a:40ff.) equates communicative competence specifically with the social rules of language use. Communicative competence is thus the ability to use language appropriately in varying social conditions.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Communicative competence in this sense does not preclude linguistic competence, but assumes it (cf. also Canale and Swain, 1980:5). Language teaching according to Paulston (op. cit.:40), therefore, has to focus on linguistic competence, communicative performance, and communicative competence. Communicative performance designates 'communication which carries no distinctive social significance'. Paulston's (op. cit.) definitions of communicative competence and communicative performance are clearly at variance with those of Hymes (op. cit.) and Canale and Swain (op. cit.) who regard communicative performance as the realisation of communicative competence.

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Canale and Swain (1980) maintain that communicative competence<sup>25</sup> includes three competencies:<sup>26</sup>

- Grammatical competence which includes knowledge of lexical items, the rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology.
- Sociolinguistic competence comprises two sets of rules, namely sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The former specify ways in which language may be used appropriately in various communicative events. The latter relate to rules of cohesion and coherence. Sociolinguistic competence is also related to a sensitivity on part of the speaker to style and register.
- Strategic competence refers to verbal and non-verbal communication strategies which an interlocutor may draw upon to overcome failures in communication.

Canale and Swain's (op. cit.) position was slightly revised by Canale in 1983. The major difference between the two positions pertain to the definition of sociolinguistic competence. Whereas Canale and Swain (op. cit.) relate this to both sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse, Canale (op. cit.) limits sociolinguistic competence to sociocultural rules of use and identifies a fourth category, namely discourse competence. The latter is understood as a mastery of both the rules of coherence and cohesion.

Kalantzis *et al* (1989:111) summarise aptly the critique of the above model. Their criticisms centre around the following four issues:

- The theoretical distinction between competence and performance is not easily maintained in practice;<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Communicative competence refers here to the systems of *knowledge* and *skill* required in the communicative event (cf. Canale, 1983:5).

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion how these competencies may influence second language teaching and the construction of a communicative testing programme compare Canale and Swain (op. cit.:31-35).

<sup>27</sup> The distinction between competence and performance is particularly clear in their definition of communicative competence. This notion, according to Canale (1983:14), consists of two components, namely knowledge and skill. Consequently, second language pedagogy should not only focus on knowledge of the second language, but also on the skills how to use this knowledge in authentic communicative situations. The sharp distinction between

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- The interaction between the different competencies has not been made clear;
  - The criteria upon which a linguistic problem should be categorised as grammatical, sociolinguistic, or discoursal are not obvious;
  - The idea of a strategic competence is particularly problematic because of two reasons: firstly, the idea is ill-defined, and secondly, its role in cross-cultural communication is not self-evident. Bachman (1990:99ff.) also criticises Canale and Swain's (op. cit.) explication of this term because, by limiting it to interactional issues between interlocutors they (cf. Canale and Swain, op. cit.) overlook the possible contribution of the linguistic context.

Bachman (op. cit.:84ff.) contends that attempts to validate empirically the distinction between the categories grammatical competence, discourse competence, and sociolinguistic competence have failed.

Bachman (ibid.) considers both knowledge (language competence) and capacity for implementing competence in his model of communicative competence. He (ibid.), therefore, defines *communicative language ability* as

knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use.

Based upon what can be empirically validated, Bachman (op. cit.) contends that language competence<sup>28</sup> can be subdivided into organisational and pragmatic competence. **Figure 5.3.4** charts Bachman's (op. cit.) model:

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knowledge and skill has a profound influence on language pedagogy. Firstly, a pupil must receive as much comprehensible input as possible, and, secondly, comprehension activities must precede production activities in the second language.

<sup>28</sup> Note that language competence is only one component of what Bachman (op. cit.:84) calls the communicative language ability. The other two are strategic competence (the mental capacity for implementing the knowledge components of language competence) and psychophysiological mechanisms. The latter designate neurological and psychological processes concerned with language performance.

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**Language Competence**

- 1 Organisational Competence**
  - 1.1 Grammatical Competence**
    - Vocabulary
    - Morphology
    - Syntax
    - Phonology/Graphology
  - 1.2 Textual Competence**
    - Cohesion
    - Rhetorical organisation
- 2 Pragmatic Competence**
  - 2.1 Illocutionary Competence**
    - Speech acts
    - Language functions
  - 2.2 Sociolinguistic Competence**
    - Sensitivity to differences in dialect and register
    - Ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech

*Figure 5.3.4: Bachman's (1990) model of language competence*

Although Bachman's (op. cit.) distinction of communicative language ability into organisational and pragmatic competence has been driven by language testing considerations, it has also been influenced by a linguistic theory of referentiality. Organisational competence, on the one hand, deals with the question of how signals used in communication refer to people, things, and ideas; pragmatic competence, on the other hand, examines the relationship between signs and their referents on the one hand, and language users and the linguistic context on the other.

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Bachman's (op. cit.) definition of pragmatic competence has clearly been influenced by van Dijk (1977) in general, and in particular by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) in the field of illocutionary competence and by Halliday (1973, 1976) as far as language functions are concerned.

When one compares Bachman's (op. cit.) model to Canale and Swain's (op. cit.), a few striking characteristics of Bachman's work emerge. Firstly, the model deals with competence (skill) *and* performance (method). The skill and method elements are intended to deal with language in actual situations. Secondly, strategic competence is assigned an autonomous position and is linked to work done in second language acquisition. Also, grammatical and textual competencies are subsumed under the heading 'organisational'; Canale and Swain's (op. cit.) sociolinguistic competence becomes now pragmatic competence. Finally, one must agree with Skehan (1988) that one of the major advantages of Bachman's model (1980) is the way in which it incorporates skill and method factors.

## 5.4 Teacher Training Programmes

### 5.4.1 Introduction

The NEPI report (1993:235-236) identifies seven major areas of present teacher training policy that need urgent reassessment. They are:

- Planning and provision;
- Location and control;
- Curriculum;
- Access to teacher education;
- Certification and assessment of teachers;
- Organisation, accountability, and professional development of teachers; and
- Quality and qualifications of teacher educators.

The pursuance of multilingualism in the 1993 Constitution as a new policy direction will obviously impact on most of the above-mentioned policy areas. The extent and aim of this study, however, do not permit an in-depth discussion of all these policy considerations. Consequently, only one area of the political debate will be investigated, namely the curriculum

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of teacher training. Here, the issue of the curriculum will be investigated from the conclusions drawn about media of instruction policies for South Africa in 4.3.

#### 5.4.2 Curriculum of Teacher Training

No investigation to date has been conducted in South Africa on how the content of the curriculum for teacher training must be overhauled in the light of the emphasis multilingualism and multiculturalism<sup>29</sup> has received in the 1993 Constitution. The NEPI report (1993:243-244), acutely aware of this dilemma, therefore, chooses to focus exclusively on curriculum priorities rather than curriculum content.

The literature highlights three burning issues which educationists must consider in drawing up a new curriculum for teacher training. They are:

- Ways to combat racial prejudices at schools;
- Training of competent, bilingual teachers; and
- Tolerance and respect for dialectal differences.

Concerning the issue of racial prejudices, parochialism and racism are frequently regarded as endemic conditions plaguing multicultural schools. Education authorities have attempted, with mixed fortunes, to eradicate these attitudes by expunging racial biases from textbooks and by educating pupils in concepts such as participating democracy and racial tolerance. Watson (1984) asserts that these attitudes of parochialism and racism can only successfully be eradicated if prospective teachers are properly prepared for multicultural classrooms at teaching institutions.

The main problem of present teacher training according to Watson (*op. cit.*) and NEPI (*op. cit.*:133-139) is its proclivity towards ethnocentrism. While NEPI (*op. cit.*) emphasises a unified, national education policy and the reorganisation of teacher training programmes as

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<sup>29</sup> Multicultural education initially arose because of concerns over the academic failure of Afro-Caribbean children in the British educational system. It has two presuppositions: firstly, Afro-Caribbean children will benefit academically if their culture is more favourably presented in the school curriculum, and secondly, that the prejudice of white children will be rarefied if they could learn more about other cultures (Short, 1994:342).

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essential ingredients to undo ethnocentrism, Watson (op. cit.) deems a new approach to the sociology of education as the only solution. Teacher trainees must be taught how to handle the world outside education, race relations, and the thorny issue of immigrant pupils in the classroom.

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, an American body, maintain that:

Multicultural education should include but not be limited to experiences which (1) promote analytical and evaluative abilities to confront issues such as participatory democracy, racism and sexism, and the parity of power; (2) develop skills for values clarification including the study of the manifest and latent transmission of values; (3) examine the dynamics of diverse cultures and the implications for developing teaching strategies; and (4) examine linguistic variations and diverse learning styles as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies (reprinted in Hicks and Monroe, 1984:148).

Hicks and Monroe (op. cit.) caution against the narrow view that multicultural education is merely an attempt to improve race relations, and propose ways in which multicultural education may be infused in reading method courses.

An in-depth evaluation of their proposal is not possible here; they do, however, offer some practical suggestions of how a better understanding of a pluralist society may be imparted in pre-service teacher training courses. Some of these are (Hicks and Monroe, op. cit.:153-154):

- Teacher perspectives, which do not necessarily view a mosaic of culturally diverse groups in the classroom as detrimental to the learning process, must be inculcated;
- Pre-service teachers must be introduced to multicultural educational settings; and
- Cultural immersion programmes which would make weekly tutorials compulsory for teacher trainees at schools having a different cultural background than their own.

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In 4.3 a new model of multilingual instruction was proposed which will allow educational authorities to implement the principles of multilingualism and multiculturalism enshrined in the interim Constitution of 1993. This model emphasised mother tongue instruction especially during the primary school years and a gradual transfer to instruction in a second language.

These principles would immediately pose challenges for training of bilingual and multilingual teachers should they be implemented. A number of present obstacles may be identified. Firstly, mother tongue instruction has never been the direction in South African schools, except for Afrikaans and English schools (NEPI, 1994:76). Although African languages are being taught at most South African Universities, and at some Teacher Training Colleges, a dearth of competent, qualified language teachers may well exist. Secondly, the conclusions drawn also imply fully bilingual, and in some instances multilingual teachers. The South African school situation indicates that bilingualism is more the norm than multilingualism (cf. NEPI, 1994:82).

The above preconditions for the successful implementation of these principles can be met provided that government and civilian bodies demonstrate a strong commitment towards multilingualism.

The bilingualisation process in Catalonia exemplifies the way in which in-service programmes can be employed to train bilingual teachers for primary and secondary schools within a decade.<sup>30</sup>

Catalonia, occupying the north-eastern strip of the Iberian Peninsula, has had a history of forty years of linguistic repression. After the defeat of the Republican forces in 1939 Catalan institutions and Catalan medium of instruction in schools were prohibited. In 1979 Catalan and Castilian were reintroduced as the official regional languages of Catalonia. Educational authorities have, subsequent to this decision, decreed that both languages be used as media of instruction at all academic levels.

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<sup>30</sup> An illuminating and fascinating account of the bilingualisation process of Catalonia is provided by Petherbridge-Hernandez (1990).

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Given Catalonia's history of linguistic repression, bilingual teachers and appropriate, bilingual teaching materials were in dire need. Petherbridge-Hernandez (1990) reports, for example, that in 1978 only 18% teachers considered themselves qualified to teach Catalan. To redress this situation two in-service programmes were developed. The *Reciclatge* course, consisting of Catalan language, Catalan culture, and teaching methodology modules, is primarily aimed at first language speakers. Because non-native speakers of Catalan have not made satisfactory progress in *Reciclatge* the *Formació Professional Institucional* (FOPI), offering an intensive, immersion language course,<sup>31</sup> has been started.

The success of these two programmes is apparent from statistics, published in 1986, indicating that Catalan is part of the curriculum in 80% of both public and primary schools in Catalonia.

Petherbridge-Hernandez (op. cit.) ascribes this success to a number of factors. Some of them are:

- The prestigious value of Catalan, even though it is just a minority language;
- The thorough preparation of instructors that preceded the implementation of *Reciclatge* and *Formació Professional Institucional*; and
- The commitment of volunteer and government agencies to prepare adequate bilingual instructional material.

Notwithstanding the fine-sounding emphasis on multilingualism by the Constitution and the Minister of Education's far-reaching statement on language policy in education of November 1995, nothing will come of it if a more equitable arrangement of the *use* of South Africa's multilingual heritage cannot be negotiated. And in this process government agencies must lead the way. If this does not happen, then speakers of especially African languages will continue to perceive their languages as inferior to Afrikaans and English, and, therefore, as lacking in prestige.

Recent developments suggest that English monolingualism may eventually prevail in South Africa if they are not reversed. The SABC, announcing the advent of multilingual chan-

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<sup>31</sup> For a description and characterisation of the Catalan immersion programme, cf. Artigal, 1991).

nels of TV, may, ironically, have contributed in laying the foundations of English monolingualism. According to a press release published by the *Mail & Guardian* (January 12 to 18, 1996) English will receive the bulk of prime time viewing (65,34%), that is, between 17:00-23:00. Multilingual programming will occupy 15,2% of available time, with no other language receiving more than 4,10% (isiZulu and isiXhosa). The disparity between English programming and programming in the other languages is too obvious to ignore. These programming schedules seem to encourage the supposition that the SABC is treating the notion of multilingualism as a political palliative while it promotes a neo-monolingualism surreptitiously.

The subtle campaign to establish English monolingualism is apparently also gaining momentum at local government level, especially in the Northern Province. According to a report in the *Noord Transvaler* (26 January 1996) some City Councils have decided to allow only English in their deliberations.

The third matter concerns tolerance and respect for dialectal differences. Hicks and Monroe (1984) suggest that, in order to break down prejudices against dialects, teacher trainees keep personal journals of dialect differences during training sessions at schools. They contend that such measures will create an awareness and sensitivity towards dialectal differences.

While Hick and Monroe's (op. cit.) suggestion has obvious merits, the time has arrived that languages be taught within their proper sociolinguistic context. A review of South African University Calendars show that very few modern language departments teach sociolinguistics at all.<sup>32</sup> What is needed in the present circumstances are courses that inform students of the necessity for a standardised form, and the sociolinguistic functions of dialects.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The omission of sociolinguistics from undergraduate courses is apparently not only a South African phenomenon. Reflecting on the need for such courses Byram (1991) reports that sociolinguistics receive scant attention in undergraduate courses of French and German in Britain. He also notes that prospective teachers tend to ignore them when they are on offer.

<sup>33</sup> What is thus advocated here is what British educators term language awareness courses. Compare Brumfit (1991) for the historical background which has given the impetus for these courses. Wright (1991) provides enlightening exercises on how a language awareness exercise may be manipulated to sensitise students to dialectal differences and/or second language usage.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Chapter 5 has attempted to answer three questions posed in Chapter 1 (cf. 1.1). These were:

- Which language/dialect should be taught at school?
- How will multilingualism affect assessment instruments?
- What implications will multilingualism hold for teacher training?

After considering all the salient aspects pertaining to the question which language/dialect to use at school, the author has concluded that, because of wide-spread stigmatisation and labelling of the children speaking non-standard varieties, schools should use standard forms as media of instruction. It was argued that the teaching of the standard variety should, especially in the case of English, not only include the conventions of orthography and grammar associated with Standard English, but also pronunciation. Although not practical in all language teaching (notably in African languages), the transfer from a dialectal variety to a standardised form may be effected by bidialectal teaching methods.

With regard to the second question it was concluded that, before investigating language achievement-based tests, one must consider a new kind of assessment instrument to ascertain language preference or the dominant home language, if children were to receive instruction also in their home language. Industry will also, in future, demand an occupation-focused multilingual language competence. Assessment instruments capable of measuring multilingual language competence will have to be developed.

Once language preference has been established, new assessment instruments for measuring language achievement can be designed. Presently many scholars are suggesting that one should move towards tests that will be able to assess what pupils can *do* with language, in other words, criterion-referenced and integrative tests. Indications are that *pure* criterion-referenced and integrative tests are not feasible, but should be complemented with norm-referenced and discrete-point tests (cf. 5.3.3).

Finally, concerning the impact of multilingualism on teacher training, it was concluded that future teacher curricula should emphasise the strategies needed to combat racial prejudices at schools, the training of competent, bilingual teachers, and tolerance and respect for dialectal diversity.

## 6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, the main findings about the four research questions (cf. 1.1 and 6.2) are briefly stated again. Secondly, a number of recommendations for further research are made.

## 6.2 Main Findings

In 1.1 the main research and four subsidiary questions were worded as follows:

*How will the notion of multilingualism, as prescribed by the 1993 Constitution, affect the teaching of language?*

- Has enough language planning been done in South Africa to implement a policy of mother tongue instruction as was assumed to be possible under the old order?
- How can multilingual instruction be implemented at school?
- If and when the policy of mother tongue instruction is implemented, which language/dialect in a given area will be taught? These questions not only pertain to African languages, but also to Afrikaans and English.
- How will multilingualism affect assessment instruments?
- What implications will multilingualism hold for teacher training?

Concerning the first sub-question it was argued in 3.3.4.1 and its subsuming sections that the period prior to 1993 was characterised by an ethnolinguistic approach to language planning, that is, language planning was done for each language respectively. Although the extent of planning was certainly diverse,<sup>1</sup> planning for languages-in-education policies was undoubtedly predominant (cf. all the sections comprising 2.2).

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<sup>1</sup> Corpus and status language planning were particularly dominant areas, even in the case of African languages. Compare in this regard 3.3.4.1.1.

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It is clear that, in the South African context, most language planning has been done for Afrikaans (cf. 3.3.4.1.2), and its position as medium of instruction at school and at university is well entrenched. Because English is a well-established international language and language of learning at school and university, language planning for it differed substantially from that done for Afrikaans or the African languages. Much of the planning done for English centred around the needs of second language speakers, especially those of Africans (cf. 3.3.4.1.3).

The potential for using African languages as media of instruction is fairly limited. The problems facing African languages in this regard are numerous. Firstly, the experience teachers have of using it as a language of learning is mostly limited to preprimary years. Few schools use them beyond these years, and the instances where they are utilised in high school are rare indeed (Senate Subcommittee on Languages, 1995:11). Secondly, scholars such as Reagan (1986b) and Gugushe (1978:217) point out that African languages are in dire need of lexicon innovation. Thirdly, the use of African languages as media of instruction is also impeded by the plethora of existing dialects, and problems around the issue of status language planning (cf. 3.3.4.1.1). It is, therefore, obvious that African languages are presently not suitable as languages of learning. But, as has been demonstrated in 3.4, failure to use them as media of instruction actually puts them in a Catch-22 situation because, by not utilising them in this role, it ensures that they will never be sufficiently developed for this purpose.

With regard to the second question it was asserted in 3.3.5.1 that language matters should be arranged primarily on provincial level, an arrangement which is supported by Section 3(4) of the interim Constitution of 1993. To facilitate the declaration of languages as official on provincial level, it was concluded that, in the absence of more reliable data, the statistics of Schuring (1990; cf. Table 2.3.2b, p.19) might be used. These languages, it was suggested, should also be the languages of learning of that specific region.

In 4.3 a proposal was put forward which demonstrates how the principle of multilingualism may be put into practice in schools. As far as languages of learning are concerned, it is proposed that pupils must learn three languages. Furthermore, this model suggests that all instruction take place initially through the mother tongue; a gradual transition to second language instruction is recommended from Std 3. From Std 6 all subject teaching should be done through second language medium of instruction.

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The question which language/dialect should be taught has, however, certain implications for the teaching of language (cf. 5.2 and all subsuming sections). A feature of the South African linguistic scene is its dialectal diversity (cf. all sections consisting of 3.3.4.1). The latter has notably two implications for language teaching (cf. 5.2.1):

- How should schools handle dialectal diversity at school?
- Should schools use a standardised or non-standardised variety as medium of instruction?

The traditional manner in which schools handle dialectal diversity is to replace the dialect of the child with the standard variety. The author pointed out in 5.2.4 the dangers associated with this practice. Research into bilingual language teaching has foregrounded bidialectal language teaching as a possible means to effect transition from a vernacular to a standard variety. This method holds promise as far as dialectal diversity in Afrikaans and English is concerned, but not in African languages. The reason is that the African dialects have not been well-researched, and the relationships between dialects are not crystal clear (cf. 3.3.4.1.1 and 5.2.5).

In 5.2.5 the author argued in favour of standard varieties as media of instruction in all South Africa's major languages because of the following reasons. Firstly, the extent of dialectal diversity in African languages, and the unavailability of research data on many of these dialects, make the choice of a vernacular as medium of instruction a practical impossibility. Secondly, demographic data show clearly that *Standaard Afrikaans* is spoken by the majority of speakers of that language (3.3.4.1.2); its choice as medium of instruction is, therefore, not as severe as is the case in the African vernaculars. Thirdly, it seems that there is not sufficient empirical evidence available to suggest that South African English are developing into various streams. Although this does not foreclose the possibility of various South African Englishes developing in future, it simply means that all what is available in South Africa at the moment is Standard English (Titlestad, 1994; cf. 3.3.4.1.3).

Concerning the fourth research question, namely how multilingualism will affect assessment at school, it was demonstrated in 5.3 (and all subsuming sections) that multilingualism brings to the fore three issues, namely the need for a new kind of assessment, alternative testing methods, and clarification on *what* should be tested for.

Discarding official bilingualism and embracing the notion of multilingualism implies, *inter alia*, a greater awareness of constructing assessment instruments that will be sensitive to the dissimilar linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students. Multilingual assessment instruments will have to be devised to measure the degree of bilingualism or multilingual in individuals in order meet vocational demands from industry (cf. 5.3.2).

When one looks at alternative testing methods it becomes clear that the test maker should assess in his/her tests more what a student is able to *do* with language (criterion-referenced tests), rather than what (s)he *knows* about language (norm-referenced tests). It is, however, the contention of the writer that an exclusive utilisation of criterion-referenced tests are not feasible because of the different kinds of linguistic demands (for example, cognitive demands, and the demands imposed by everyday conversation) made on the pupil (cf. 5.3.3).

A consensus is presently developing that, what needs to be tested is communicative ability in students. Although much confusion still exists around the idea of communicative competence, the model proposed by Bachman (1990; cf. Figure 5.3.4, p.115) has become the most influential approach to clarify the concept. The advantage of Bachman's (1990) model is that it incorporates more successfully than previous attempts the notions of competence (skill) and performance (method) (cf. 5.3.4).

Teacher training is arguably one of the most important areas to be adapted to the pursuit of multilingualism. This study briefly investigated the curriculum of preservice teacher trainees for effective multilingual teaching. The successful and ideal multilingual teacher should be competently bilingual, be tolerant of and have respect for dialectal differences, and be skilled in combating racial prejudices in the classroom (cf. all sections containing 5.4).

### 6.3 Recommendations for further Research

Earlier (cf. 2.5.2), the author expressed some criticism about the way in which language rights are being handled in South Africa. As indicated, a Bill of Rights introduces an element of competition between languages. That this problem apparently also prevails in South Africa is clear from the unfortunate issue surrounding the Potgietersrus Primary School

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(cf. footnote 3 under 6.4). The present Constitutional arrangement mainly suits politicians and not necessarily educationists, and so, given the amount of distrust that has always existed between the rivalling parties, a Bill of Rights was perhaps the only solution. Language rights and pedagogy would have been served better, however, if competing language groups had agreed on a common Charter of Languages for South Africa.

It is the view of the writer that representatives of all the various languages (even those mentioned in Section 3.10c) should supplement the present arrangement by drawing up a Charter that would be acceptable to all. The Charter proposed by Brumfit (1995) may serve as a starting point to launch such an initiative. Such a Charter would address, *inter alia*, the following issues:

- The sensitivities of communities regarding their language and culture;
- The establishment of an educational dispensation which would benefit all learners irrespective of race or creed;
- The languages to be covered by the Charter;
- The management of languages in education; and
- Research into language acquisition in multilingual contexts, and the dissemination of this information to schools.

It is the contention of the author that such a Charter may serve as a useful instrument to reduce tensions generated by language issues, and as a forum where language pedagogy in multilingual settings may be discussed.

The discussion of the effect of multilingualism on language teaching in Chapter 5 gave indication of some of the typical problems associated with it. Considerations of space did not allow the author to focus on other very important implications. Some of these which need further investigation are curricula for pupils, the authoring of appropriate multilingual material for teacher training and for use at school, teaching methodology, and code-switching.

It has become clear that the curricula of pupils, just like those for teacher training, will have to be revised fundamentally if the principle of multilingualism is accepted. Textbooks have, until now, been written mainly for a particular race group. Consequently, these handbooks are imbued with cultural specific values which are often divisive by nature. Because

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education cannot and should not be free of cultural values, a major task will be to author textbooks that strike the right balance between divisive and unity-forming values.

Multilingual textbooks (African languages combined with either Afrikaans or English, or with both) are the exception rather than the norm. Existing textbooks are mostly bilingual by pairing Afrikaans and English.

Teaching methodology is another area that needs urgent investigation. The teacher, in bilingual and multilingual education, has become, for example, a language mediator. To address this problem schools have begun to introduce the concept of team teaching. Although substantial research has been done on this concept, it is a fairly novel practice in South African schools.<sup>2</sup>

#### 6.4 Conclusion

Having surveyed three implications of multilingualism on the teaching of language, and having indicated some areas that need to be thoroughly research, the author concludes that the effect of multilingualism on education is enormous.

In the introductory chapter it was pointed out that the principle of multilingualism should not be introduced before careful consideration, and clear directives have been given to educational authorities. Although a start has been made with the publication of the *Discussion Document* (1995) of the Department of Education, there are signs that the Department is foisting these *discussion* principles on schools,<sup>3</sup> rather than formulating and giving clear guidelines to schools after unhurried consultation with all stakeholders. Should this not occur, the Department risks to alienate communities who are indifferent to these discussion principles.

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<sup>2</sup> Flora Park Primary, a private school in Pietersburg, is the only example known to the author which has introduced team teaching.

<sup>3</sup> The government of the Northern Province has, for example, received a Supreme Court injunction to compel the Potgietersrus Primary School to open its doors to speakers of other languages. Although the writer does not approve the actions of the school board, the forceful conduct of the Northern Province Government may have done more harm than any good by alienating some communities from the benefits of multilingualism.

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Multilingualism should not be enforced from the top down, because the fear of communities that multilingualism may threaten or destroy their culture, needs to be assuaged .

What is needed now is a commonly agreed-upon Charter of Languages which would clearly specify and indicate how schools should handle languages at school. The element of competition between languages and cultures, which is unfortunately a by-product of securing language rights through a Bill of Rights, needs to be eliminated (cf. 2.5.2).

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