

FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

A Study of the Implementation of the Language-in-Education
Policy (LiEP) in three South African Primary Schools

By

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Abbreviations and Explanations

AILA	Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée
ANC	African National Congress
ATSA	African Teachers' Association of South Africa
BICS	Basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CI	Comments/interpretation
CLA	Critical language awareness
CM	Code-mixing
CMSA	A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa
CO	Concrete observations
CS	Code-switching
DACST	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
EFA	Education for all
EFL	English foreign language
ELTIC	English Language and Teaching Information Center
EMIS	Education Ministry Information Service
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
ESL	English second language
FF	Freedom Front
FL	Foreign language
FLL	Foreign language learning
GAA	Group Areas Act
GNU	Government of national unity
HOD	House of Delegates
HOR	House of Representatives
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
L1	First language, mother tongue or primary language
L2	Second language
LAMP	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
LANGTAG	Language Plan Task Group
LiEP	Language-in-Education Policy
LOI	Language of instruction
LOITASA	Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
LOT	Language of teaching
LWC	Language of wider communication
MEC	Minister of Executive Committee (Provincial Minister)
MOI	Medium of instruction
MP	Minister of Parliament
MT	Mother tongue

NECC	National Education Crisis Committee (approximately 1980-1986 and discussed in chapter 2 only)
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee (roughly after 1986)
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NFR	Norges forskningsråd (The Norwegian Research Council)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NLP	National Language Project
NP	National Party
NUFU	Norwegian University Fund
OBE	Outcomes-based education
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SABRA	South African Bureau of Racial Affairs
SAILI	Scientific and Industrial Leadership Initiative
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SASO	South African Students' Organization
SGB	School Governing Body
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SLA	Second language acquisition
SLL	Second language learning
TBVC states	Former Homelands of Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei
TL	Target language
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA	University of South Africa
USWE	Use Speak and Write English
UWC	University of the Western Cape

Chapter 1. Setting the Stage

1.1 Introduction

There is a general consensus among educators and researchers looking into the state of education in Africa that the primary language of the students is the language through which education should take place. As each formerly colonised territory in Africa has achieved independence, policies for the newly independent states have been formulated. The last four decades have shown us that very often the articulation of policy, particularly language policy, has more to do with a sense of political expediency than reasons of economic or educational development (Alexander, 1989, 1992). Multilingual language policies which recognize linguistic pluralism as resources for nation-building are increasingly becoming commonplace. Many of these policies envision implementation through bilingual education, which open up new possibilities for oppressed language groups (both indigenous and immigrant languages groups) and their speakers. However, Akinnaso (1993) points out that there is often a mismatch between policy and the plan for implementation, particularly with regard to language policy in education. Thus the implementation plan has little potential for achieving the goals of the policy. The situation in South Africa is one in which multilingualism is both supported and contested, despite the progressive commitment to equality of language rights in the country's constitution (Alexander, 1992).

The new Constitution of 1993 in post-apartheid South Africa embraces language as a basic human right and multilingualism as a national resource, introducing nine major African languages (Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga) as official languages alongside English and Afrikaans, along with the dismantling of the apartheid educational system. To transform the previous apartheid education system into a diversifying one, where the "rainbow" of identities and languages are accepted, and to construct a national identity that is multilingual and multicultural constitute ideological paradoxes which are a challenge to implement (Hornberger, 1991). For Hornberger (1991) multilingual language policies are essentially about opening up ideological and implementational space in the environment for as many languages as possible, and in particular, endangered languages if they are to evolve and flourish rather than dwindle and disappear. In this investigation I analyze the effectiveness of the South African multilingual language policy in promoting additive and functional multilingualism and in opening up the

ideological and implementational space needed for the survival of the previously oppressed African languages.

1.2 The beginning

As I think back about how my interest in the issues addressed in this dissertation first began, I recall my involvement in a course as an Icelandic exchange student at the University of Oslo during my undergraduate studies. The course was one of the few taught in English and since my Norwegian at the time was nonexistent I was encouraged to participate in the seminar series, which was then known as *Education in Africa* led by Prof. Birgit Brock-Utne (Brock-Utne and Miettinen, 1998). Little did I know that my participation in this seminar was to determine my future research interests in relation to language policy, language in education and language rights in Africa and other parts of the world. To some extent, my interest in language issues is also the result of being from a small but extremely proud language group and from a nation where the national language policy plays an important role in promoting and maintaining our language at all educational levels (the language I am referring to is Icelandic, which has roughly 300,000 speakers worldwide. For more information cf Holmarsdottir, 2001a). My interest may also have been influenced by the fact that I myself was an immigrant in the United States and as a result suffered the loss of my mother tongue,¹ which I have subsequently regained through much effort and perseverance. For me this language now plays an important role in my personal life and regardless of which country I find myself living and working in it is the language used in our home. Obviously these circumstances play a big role in influencing my research interests and subsequent work.

During the above mentioned seminar series I was introduced to a whole range of issues relating to education in Africa that I had never contemplated before. Thinking back about the seminar series, one day in particular comes to my mind. During one of Prof. Brock-Utne's lectures she handed out a leaflet introducing a book launch, which featured writers of children's books from various African countries. However, on the list of books featured were book titles in English only and although I am aware that there are books written in African

¹ Mother tongue and/or primary language is also referred to in the literature as L1. In this study I generally use the term mother tongue to refer to the primary language of the learners. I do, however, acknowledge that the learner's primary language may be the language of the father and not the mother, but the term mother tongue is more commonly used by my informants in this investigation and thus I feel it is more appropriate to use their words.

languages this led me to question the role of language in general and as time went on, how this issue is dealt with particularly in Africa (as the course was on education in Africa). Shortly afterwards, I began to look into the language question with reference to Africa and found out that in many countries on the continent children were often required to receive most, if not all, of their education in a language that was not their mother tongue nor even a regional language. This led me to question this practice, which for many means being educated in a foreign language.

In my desire to understand this situation better I decided, as part of my Master thesis, to look into the situation of language policy in Namibia, a country often referred to as “the last colony in Africa” (Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b). I found the fact that they had chosen English as their official language puzzling given that less than 1% of the population spoke it as a mother tongue. My thesis was, in part, a follow-up of a consultancy report on the status of the African languages in Namibia that my advisor had written for the Namibian ministry of Education (Brock-Utne, 1995, 1997). When my adviser decided to apply for research funds to conduct a study of the language of education in Tanzania and South Africa I was asked and accepted to write my doctoral study as part of the project (the project will be described later in this section). In the division of labor between the project leader, Prof. Birgit Brock-Utne, and me we decided that I would concentrate on South Africa while she, together with master students from Tanzania, would concentrate on the Tanzanian part of the project. My interest in undertaking a study about language policy in South Africa seemed then a natural step given that my previous work dealt with language policy issues in Namibia, a country with a similar history as South Africa. In a sense I was interested in finding out if the progressive language policy in South Africa was truly being implemented. If this were the case then South Africa could serve as a model for various other multilingual countries not only in Africa, but in other regions of the world as well.

1.3 The background

The language policy in education is a key example of the educational dilemmas facing many countries on the African continent in the new millennium.

Despite the research on the language situation in education throughout Africa, which highlights the usefulness of African languages (the mother tongue of students or regional

languages) as medium of instruction, the use of these languages in education, in general, remains a contentious issue (cf Afolayan, 1976; Akinnaso, 1993; Bamgbose, 1984; Benson, 2000, 2002, 2004; Obanya, 1980, 1998; Williams, 1993a, 1993b, 1998 among others). Additionally, Obanya (1998) argues that several programs of mother tongue education, including those publicized as highly successful, have not gone beyond the experimental phase with other even more compellingly publicized programs being terminated soon after there was a regime change (for example, the six national languages developed for education in Sekou Toure's Guinea). Moreover, some researchers have even argued that "educational policy and practice in linguistically diverse contexts may be based on semi-articulated assumptions about the nature of human learning, and second language learning in particular" (Cummins, 2000:2). Furthermore, it is argued that there is a need for studies which, in addition to analyzing language policies, focus on the implementation of language policies in the African context. This is crucial given that there is evidence suggesting that although there are many admirable policies developed throughout Africa, the efficiency of their implementation is questionable (Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas & Africa, 1986).

The change in the language policy of South Africa (DoE, 1997a; RSA, 1996) meant an increase in the number of recognized official languages from two to eleven. The changes in the laws offer another set of living conditions and possibilities for intervention in society than earlier in history, at least in theory. The recognition of several indigenous languages as resources (the *language-as-resource* orientation was one of three language orientations described by Ruiz, 1988)² in the building of a democratic society seems to indicate a will to alter the distribution of power amongst language groups. If this is achieved, it is believed that the way will be opened for new values, new ideas, and a new assessment of the world.

Multilingual nations are faced with linguistic policy decisions concerning which national or official language(s) to use in government and administrative sectors. Such policy decisions, which often give status to "international" or former colonial languages in these areas may also

² The conceptual framework that Ruiz (1988) presents includes three orientations toward language and its role in society: language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource. The framework was originally published in the NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education) journal in 1984. However, I was unable to obtain the original article as it is out of publication. I, therefore, contacted Richard Ruiz via e-mail. Prof. Ruiz kindly responded to my inquiry by indicating that the article was republished in the book by McKay and Wong in 1988. Thus I use this print as my source and not the more traditionally referred to article from 1984. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. Ruiz for his assistance.

influence and promote the use of these languages in the educational sector³. Another recurring issue for educational policy in many of these countries has been “the extent and the nature of support that second language learners require to succeed academically. Students must learn the language of instruction at the same time as they are expected to learn academic content *through* the language of instruction” (Cummins, 2000:57).

Since the first democratic elections in South Africa, educational legislation has been passed to implement a new school system, introducing the eleven official languages (amongst those nine African languages [Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga], a European [English] and a European-based [Afrikaans] language) and a new policy for schools on medium of instruction. In South Africa, despite a very progressive language in education policy (July 1997) which enables learners or their guardians to choose the language of instruction, schools catering for learners who are speakers of African languages still, as a general rule, use English as their medium of instruction from the 4th grade. It is important to note here that according to the current Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) there is nothing preventing South African schools from using an African Language as the language of instruction all through the primary school level as well as in secondary school and higher education. Research conducted in the country has shown the results of using English as a medium of instruction in the primary phase as disastrous (Desai, 1999, 2003; Heugh, 1995a; NEPI, 1992). In addition, many South Africans are concerned about the lack of promotion and development of African languages (Alexander, 2000; Desai, 2000; Koloti, 2000). These people often cite negative attitudes on the part of the speakers of African languages as one of the major obstacles in promoting African languages (Alexander, 1999, 2000; Desai, 2000). The neighboring country Namibia is in a very similar situation with a progressive language in education policy, which is not being implemented (Brock-Utne, 1995, 1997; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001; Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b).

³ This is, however, not always the case. Kiswahili is, for instance, the language used for administration, in ministerial documents, in Parliament and in the lower courts in Tanzania while English is the language of instruction at secondary and tertiary levels.

1.4 Problem statement

This study is written under the auspices of the research project entitled: “An Analysis of Policies and Practices Concerning Languages in Education in Primary Schools in South Africa and Secondary Schools in Tanzania”, supported by the Norwegian Research Council⁴ (NRC) and led by Prof. Birgit Brock-Utne (2000b, 2003a). In the original NRC project proposal Prof. Brock-Utne questions the appropriateness of the many theories and use of terms such as bilingualism for use in post-colonial contexts, particularly in Africa. Therefore, in addition to looking at the specific questions proposed in this dissertation, this project elaborates on Prof. Brock-Utne’s criticism and as a result I have developed my own arguments concerning the language learning context (cf chapter 4 for this discussion).

The NRC project explores the related issues of policy and practice and the fundamental object of inquiry is twofold. It aimed at critically analyzing and describing the language in education policy of South Africa and Tanzania. Secondly, an analysis of the policy’s implementation is made and particular attention is focused on the level where the transition from an African language to a foreign medium of instruction occurs. In Tanzania this is at the entry to secondary school whereas in South Africa this takes place, generally, in the fourth grade of primary school. I specifically use the term “foreign medium” when describing the use of English as medium of instruction in reference to South Africa although some people in South Africa may disagree that English is a foreign language in the country. During my fieldwork I was based at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) at which time I presented some initial findings during an in-house seminar. In this seminar a Professor at the Faculty of Education commented that he found it interesting that I saw English as a foreign language, but

⁴ The NRC project is a four-year project (2001-2004). In the spring of 2000 Prof. Brock-Utne developed this project as a more theoretically elaborate, but practically more limited version of a NUFU project together with partners in South Africa and Tanzania in Bagamoyo, Tanzania in January 2000 (Brock-Utne, 2002a). NUFU – Norwegian University Fund is a fund to be used by researchers from developing countries working with researchers from Norway on cooperative research projects and staff development in the South. The NUFU project, referred to as LOITASA, contained two different research components apart from a staff development component. The first research component had to do with a description and analysis of the current language policies, their background and the forces working for and against change, which this dissertation partially contributes towards. In addition, I have chosen to look at how the teachers and students cope in the classrooms in the last part of primary school, the intermediate phase, in South Africa. The second research component of the LOITASA project involved an action component where an experiment was planned and involved some classes in secondary school in Tanzania and primary school in South Africa to be taught in their own language in some subjects for two more years (in South Africa this is to be done for three years). The LOITASA project is already underway and began in 2002.

that he agreed with my classification. I will discuss in detail my reasons for this at a later point in the thesis (cf chapter 4).

Although this doctoral study is part of the larger NUFU and NRC projects the overall research focus, research questions and research design were developed solely by this researcher with the objectives of the overall project in mind. This has been useful in drawing in the comparative aspect that was underscored in the project proposal. Furthermore, this association has led to several collaborations between this researcher and the overall project leader, Prof. Birgit Brock-Utne, which explains many of the references to the project leader individually and to other publications that have been written in collaboration by the two researchers.

The main objectives of this project are:

- To analyze the language-in-education policy in South Africa over the past two decades.
- To analyze specific areas in the implementation of the language policy for grade 4, since this is generally the level where the transition from mother tongue to English⁵ medium of instruction takes place. This includes among other things: the realities of the classroom situation, the development of curriculum materials, teacher-training, in-service support and in-service training.

In short my part of the project will attempt to investigate the following topics, that are divided into two parts:

1. Policy questions

What is the ideology behind the educational language policy in South Africa? Why and how did the language in education policy develop the way it did (the social relationships of power)? What have been and are the forces behind the formulation of the language policy for education in South Africa? What has been the role of the various donor agencies and of the African elites? What role does this discourse (the LiEP) play in the (re)production and challenge of dominance?

⁵ I highlight here that transition is from the mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction. Although I do acknowledge that there are instances where the transition is from mother tongue to Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, the general practice for the majority of the black population is from mother tongue to English. As a result my focus in this investigation is on the latter.

2. *Classroom realities*

How well do pupils adjust to having a foreign language as a medium of instruction? How do teachers and their students deal with the transition from mother tongue to a foreign medium of instruction? Why is the transition taking place? How do teachers cope with teaching in a language they do not use outside of the classroom? What language do teachers want to teach in and pupils want to be taught in and why? What language do parents want their children to be taught in and why?

Through an understanding of how the LiEP is implemented in relation to a specific language group in three South African schools⁶ in the Western Cape Province this investigation makes a contribution to the discussion of whether South African schools truly provide equal educational opportunities to the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population of the country. This research project also aims at contributing to better implementation of educational language policies through descriptions and discussions of classroom realities. This analysis is seen as necessary in order to better understand the effectiveness of the language policy in promoting the use of the African languages in the educational sector, which could have implications for other multilingual states struggling with similar linguistic dilemmas. The issue of language and power and particularly the connections between language use (discourse) and unequal relations of power are part of the focus with reference to the actual policy as highlighted above, and attempts to “increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others” by analyzing the underlying ideologies of the LiEP (Fairclough, 1989:1). The comparison of the policy versus the practice will benefit not only the Western Cape Province and South Africa in general, but perhaps also the field of education by identifying problems in the implementation process of the language provisions prescribed in the LiEP. This may assist policymakers, education officials and others to work out viable and sustainable modalities for the implementation of *all* the languages stipulated in the LiEP and to help plan accordingly for language education and language in education in South Africa, thus increasing our understanding of this field.

I now move on to the next section, where I briefly introduce some of the core concepts used in this study.

⁶ The decision for my choices here will be discussed later in this chapter.

1.5 Introduction of core concepts

It is believed important for practical reasons to briefly introduce and discuss some core concepts. The principle notions discussed are monolingualism, bi-/multilingualism, the concept of language acquisition, medium of instruction and the notion of language of learning and teaching is presented. In this section I only briefly introduce definitions and discuss these concepts and I will elaborate on them later in this thesis (cf chapter 4 for a detailed discussion).

1.5.1 Monolingualism

Defining the concept of monolingualism is seen as important for practical reasons so that the reader is aware of the term and how it is understood and used by the researcher.

A simple definition of the word monolingual is “knowing or using one language” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1998:1184).

Putting the investigation of monolingualism and bi-/multilingualism into perspective Suzanne Romaine (1995:1), in the introduction to her book “Bilingualism”, declares the following:

It would certainly be odd to encounter a book with the title *Monolingualism*. However, it is precisely a monolingual perspective which modern linguistic theory takes as its starting point in dealing with basic analytical problems such as the construction of grammars and the nature of competence.

Chomsky (1965:3) appears to adhere to this perspective in his description of the parameters in the study of language suggesting that “linguistic theory is connected primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly”. Conversely, Chomsky’s orientation to linguistic theory seems to differ considerably with that of Jakobson (1953 cited in Romaine, 1995:1), who states: “Bilingualism is for me the fundamental problem of linguistics”. Romaine emphasizes these two distinctions to highlight her concern about the inadequacy of the current theoretical models, which are based on the ideal speaker and listener (Romaine, 1995).

Thus one could say that in linguistics monolingualism is the foundation on which the study of bi-/multilingualism is built, but perhaps these foundations need improving in order to better understand bi-/multilingualism. A simplistic definition of monolingualism relates to the issue of a single language only, where the person(s) concerned know or use only one language as opposed to bi-/multilingualism, which I will now discuss.

1.5.2 Bi-/multilingualism

In sociolinguistics there is a long tradition for defining the term bilingualism/multilingualism (Edwards, 1994b). There are many definitions of the terms bilingualism or multilingualism, and some of them contradict each other. The confusion is due to a disagreement on which criteria should be used to determine competence and performance. Some authors have arbitrarily imposed their own, often middle-class, measures, and judge other people's competencies in one or several languages to be deficient. According to Webster's dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1998:175) the term is defined as "using or [being] able to use two languages especially with equal fluency". Bloomfield (1933:56) used a similar definition of bilingualism as "the native-like control of two languages". A contradictory view of the perfect bilingual is proposed by Macnamara (1967) who maintains that a bilingual is anyone who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills; listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, in a language other than their mother tongue. Haugen (1953:7 emphasis original) defines bilingualism as the ability to "produce *complete, meaningful utterances* in the other language". Some authors have thus insisted on equal mastery of both languages as a prerequisite for bilingualism.

Many authors agree that the notion of bilingualism has to be considered as a relative one, since it is impossible to determine objectively when a person has equal command of two or more languages (Mackey, 1987).⁷ A broad definition of bilingualism is being able to function daily in two languages (Edwards, 1994a:55-56; Mackey, 1987:700). Moreover, Mackey (1968:555) suggests that there are four questions, which a description of bilingualism must focus on: *degree, function, alternation, and interference*. Thus degree concerns proficiency in each of the languages concerned. "In other words, how bilingual is" the individual (Mackey,

⁷ One may also speak two languages equally well but write the one better than the other. One may also prefer using one language in one setting and another language in another setting.

1968:555). Function deals with the uses that a bilingual speaker has for each of the languages and the different roles they have in the individuals' complete collection. Alternation relates to the extent that individuals alternate between the languages. How and under what conditions does the individual change from one language to another. Finally interference concerns the extent that the individual manages to keep the languages separate or whether they are fused.

Furthermore, it is important to note that in some definitions the term 'bilingualism' includes multilingualism as Romaine (1995) maintains (cf 4.4.1 for the discussion by Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and from this point I will generally use the term multilingualism to refer to both bilingualism and multilingualism, which entails the knowledge or use of more than one language (as opposed to monolingualism). However, where the literature specifically refers to bilingualism then this term will be used in relation to such sources and, in general, in education the term bilingual is more often used to refer to the various models as opposed to multilingual.

1.5.3 Language acquisition

Language acquisition definitions and theories are again based on an understanding of a monolingual situation. The idea of language acquisition in relation to multilingualism is dependent on how you define the concept and whether you are stating that it is an issue of foreign language learning or second language acquisition. A straightforward understanding of language acquisition is simply how and when a language is learned.

In countries throughout the world a very positive picture is portrayed for affluent children who are learning a foreign language, which may be simplistically defined as bilingual education. However, when the issue is discussed in relation to low-income public school students, immigrants, minority groups and so on the picture of bilingual education is painted quite differently (Cummins, 2000). One could then also ask why bilingualism is generally seen as "good for the rich and bad for the poor" (Cummins, 2000:18)? Cummins (2000) has this quote as a statement and not a question. However, for the purpose of this study I feel that it is better posed as a question, something to be considered throughout the study. Anat Harrel made the statement during a workshop in San Francisco on December 16, 1999 in reaction to an advertisement for private school education in which French was taught as an additional

language. Her argument was that French was portrayed as positive bilingual education as opposed to the controversy surrounding Spanish-English bilingual education in the United States. Also in South Africa many parents pay for expensive private school education, which often includes teaching of European languages as additional languages, as opposed to the nine official African languages found in South Africa. This paradox highlights the power relations that exist in these and other societies and how some languages are perceived as positive in comparison to others. This is related to the discussion by Ruiz (1988) who argues for a language-as-resource orientation which acknowledges the existing linguistic resources found within a society and that they should be seen as an asset and not as a problem. This orientation would not only challenge the belief in “monolingualism [or the limited view of which languages are seen as appropriate to learn] as the only acceptable social condition...” it would also “...acknowledge the importance of alternative linguistic behavior” (Ruiz, 1988:18) in which the African languages found in South Africa are not seen as a problem, but as a resource.

Another important factor that needs to be considered when dealing with second language (L2)⁸ learning is the age of acquisition, when the second or foreign language is learned, which may influence the degree of competence in the second language (Mackey, 1987). Researchers also distinguish between child bilingualism and adult bilingualism. In sociolinguistic research there is a tradition for discussing whether it is easier for children or for adults to learn a second language and what the “ideal” age is for acquiring a second language (Edwards, 1994b). This is often based on the critical period hypothesis, which is believed to last until roughly the age of puberty and after which language acquisition becomes increasingly difficult (Lenneberg, 1967). As Lenneberg (1967:176) suggests the ability “to learn a language after the beginning of ...puberty...seems to disappear after this age, and foreign languages have to be taught and learned through a conscious and labored effort”. This diminished ability to learn language(s) is said to be due to the loss of plasticity in the brain. In particular this hypothesis has influenced much of the thinking on language learning and especially second language acquisition (cf chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion). Romaine (1995:240) finds fault with the hypothesis and maintains, “what is ‘critical’ about second language acquisition is not age so much as the circumstances in which it takes place”. This

⁸ For a discussion of the difference between L2 and foreign language see Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:9-10), Phillipson (1991) or Lambert (1990) and my own discussion in Chapter 4.

hypothesis also has implications for different types of bilingual educational models that are used and the circumstances can produce different outcomes.

In short, language acquisition is concerned with how and when a language or languages are learned.

1.5.4 Medium of instruction/language of learning and teaching

The medium of instruction simply means the language through which students are educated. In South Africa the term “language of learning and teaching” (LOLT) – is now widely used. However, an important note might be that the language of teaching is not necessarily the same as the language of learning and this distinction needs to be kept in mind. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis I will generally refer to the medium of instruction (MOI) or the language of instruction (LOI) when discussing the issue of language used in the classroom situation.

1.5.5 Discourse

According to van Dijk (1998:195) ‘discourse’ is “a highly complex and ambiguous notion, and that as soon as we really want to give a ‘definition’ we already need to start making all kind of analytical distinctions, use other concepts, and indeed start to theorize about discourse”. As such he argues that it is futile to give an *exact* definition. As such “discourse is as general and therefore as vague a notion as ‘language’, ‘society’ or ‘culture’” (van Dijk, 1998:195). Fairclough (1989:20) on the other hand views discourse as “language as a form of social practice”. Thus discourse views language as being socially determined.

Discourse may also be used to refer to abstract *types* (van Dijk, 1998). Thus as opposed to referring to a *particular* conversation, news story, political document the term discourse is used to designate these in more general terms (van Dijk, 1998). Additionally, discourse according to van Dijk (1998:196) is used to refer to an abstract type such as specific *genres*, generally “in combination with an adjective denoting a genre or social domain”, for example *political discourse*, *academic discourse*, *scientific discourse* and so on. There are also other

semiotic discourses such as dance, art, and movies. However, I shall follow van Dijk's (1998:197) notion and use "the *restricted* notion of 'discourse' (text or talk) when referring to the *verbal* dimension of communicative interaction" as opposed to the *extended* notion of discourse referring to the entire communicative event combining the verbal with the visual and/or the gestural.

1.6 Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP)

In the interim 1993 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in the subsequent 1996 Constitution, in Section 6(1), eleven languages are recognized to be official languages. As a result of this new law nine indigenous African languages were included with the former two official languages, English and Afrikaans. The Constitution further imposes a positive duty upon the state that mandates the state in:

Recognizing the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages (RSA, 1996:paragraph 6.3).

Furthermore, Section 29(2) states the rights of citizens "to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable". To this end, there is a provision in subsection 5 for the creation of the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) to promote and create conditions for the development and use of:

- i. all official languages;
- ii. the Khoi,⁹ Nama and San languages; and
- iii. sign language

In 1995 this board became a reality as a result of the Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995 with the first members being sworn in April 1996 for a period of five years (PANSALB, 2000a).

Since the first democratic elections in South Africa, educational legislation has been passed to implement a new school system, introducing the eleven official languages (amongst those nine African languages [Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and

⁹ See 3.1 for a discussion regarding the spelling of this language in the Constitution.

Tsonga], a European [English] and a European-based [Afrikaans] language) and a new policy for schools on medium of instruction. The main policy objectives of the LiEP are to promote additive and functional multilingualism, and sociolinguistic and cultural integration. Accordingly in the preamble of the LiEP the following points are of relevance (DoE, 1997a:1):

- (3) The new language in education policy is conceived as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language, and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one's own would be encouraged.
- (5) ...the underlying principle is to maintain language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence, the Department's position that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our language-in-education policy.

For its mainstream language in education policy the Department of Education has decided on a system or model of "structured bilingual education found in dual-medium (also known as two-way immersion) programmes" (DoE, 1997a:1). The ultimate intended outcome of this policy is that two or more languages will be perceived and used as languages of learning for all learners in the country (Alexander, 2000:17; DoE, 1997a:13; Lockett, 1995:75).

As mentioned the change in the language policy of South Africa meant an increase in the number of recognized official languages from two to eleven (DoE, 1997a; RSA, 1996). The changes in the laws offer another set of living conditions for the African languages in South Africa than earlier in history, at least in theory. The recognition of several indigenous languages as resources in the building of a democratic society seems to indicate a will to alter the distribution of power amongst language groups. In an effort to eliminate the domination of one language group by another, the drafters of South Africa's Constitution decided to make all eleven of the country's major languages equal and official, but without specifying how this was to be accomplished.

1.7 The organization of the study

The study is organized into eight individual chapters. In this first chapter I have, thus far, presented a short introduction to the chapter, discussed how I became interested in the issues presented in the dissertation and what influenced my decision to pursue the topic of study. This was followed by a brief discussion of the South African case along with a description of the project my thesis is a part of. Subsequently, I presented the problem statement and the specific aims of the study. Finally a brief discussion and definition of core concepts, to be elaborated upon further in subsequent chapters, were presented followed by a subsection dealing with a general account of the LiEP. In the conclusion of this chapter the limitations of the study will be discussed.

Historically, the ex-colonial regimes have exploited and dominated the African people of South Africa. Thus, chapter 2 presents a review of South Africa's past in order to better understand the present. Through the historical framework of the apartheid period to present day South Africa I examine not only the sociopolitical history of the country, but its educational history as well.

Chapter 3 presents a brief discussion of the languages in South Africa with a special focus on the nine official African languages. The multilingual situation is described and a discussion of the total number of languages in the country is entered into. Finally the missionary influence that led to the codification of the African languages is debated as well as the calls for harmonization of the African languages.

In chapter 4 a literature review is presented and the theoretical framework used in the study is described and discussed in detail. The theories presented in this chapter are subsequently used to organize and understand the data collected. The chapter begins with a discussion of the foundations of critical theory upon which this study is based and in particular Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is described, as this will be used as an analytical tool in the investigation of the LiEP. This is followed by a discussion of how the concepts of *foreign language learning*, *second language acquisition*, and *bi-/multilingualism* are understood in the context of this study. Additionally, a presentation of the models of bilingual education as described by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) is provided. In closing, the issue of foreign language learning versus second language acquisition is debated and various models are presented.

The research methodology used in the study is described in chapter 5. This chapter includes a detailed discussion of the ethnographic method used and how preparation for the fieldwork proceeded. A description of the data collection process is presented which includes issues concerning access, site selection, observations, fieldnotes, interviews, and the reading comprehension task. Furthermore, a detailed explanation of the data analysis, which includes both the use of grounded theory methods and critical discourse analysis (CDA) combined in an ethnographic study is given along with a discussion concerning validity and reliability.

In chapter 6 I present a historical account of language policy in the South African context. This is followed by a detailed discussion and analysis of the developments leading up to and including the LiEP through analyzing a number of political documents using CDA methods. This is the policy aspect, which serves as a background to the actual implementation discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 7 deals with the presentation and discussion of the classroom research findings, which are divided into several themes. The first section is used as an introduction and presents the specific questions that were being asked in the investigation followed by a short contextual presentation. After careful analysis of the data using the constant comparative method as prescribed in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) a number of categories emerged. These categories and how they relate to the questions being asked serve to organize the remainder of the chapter.

Finally, chapter 8 includes a summary of the research findings and discussion. The chapter also includes a segment in which implications for future research are discussed.

1.8 Limitations of the study

A major limitation of this research has to do with the research methodology. This study does not attempt to generalize its findings due to the limited number of schools participating (a total of three schools located in the Western Cape Province) and the limited number of people interviewed (24 in total). These schools do, however, represent a general model of schools found in similar contexts. Thus it may be possible on this basis to combine the outcomes of this study with other studies in similar contexts (particularly a number of studies being conducted by other researchers in the Western Cape province and other provinces in South

Africa) and combined this will give us a more complete picture. This issue is discussed in further detail in the methodology chapter (cf chapter 8 for a discussion about generalizability).

Limitations also exist concerning the researcher's own background. I have conducted this research as a student of education and not as a linguist, as well as an outsider whose own experience comprises work in an industrial country. Throughout many countries in the industrialized world "linguistic majority parents place **their** children in schools with their own language" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:270 emphasis original) thus it can be said that in this context the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community (a relatively familiar language) is being used as the medium of instruction for majority populations (those in power), generally from grade 1 to the university level. What Skutnabb-Kangas points out (which is relevant to this study) is that mother tongue medium education is a normal matter, when the group has enough power to have a system where this type of education is possible. As an example, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:270) points out that "English-speaking parents in South Africa have until now chosen English medium education for their children". Yet, it is acknowledged that in many of these same countries this is not true for the linguistic minorities (or oppressed majority groups) or large populations of immigrants (those who possess little or no power) where mother tongue medium education is not provided for many of these groups. Thus in most countries in the "South" and on the African continent, in particular, a foreign medium, usually an ex-colonial, language is used as the language in education. Nevertheless, I have attempted to reduce the limitation concerning my own background confined primarily to work in an industrial country and increase my understanding of the South African context by spending two extensive periods in the field in order to gain an in-depth perspective into the society. The fieldwork periods were first a seven-month period where the majority of data collection took place. This was followed by an eight-month period in Norway where the data was further scrutinized and followed up by a one-year period in which additional data collection took place combined with the final writing-up phase. Thus in total one year and seven months was spent in the field.

Finally, my research has been slightly impeded by my lack of linguistic knowledge of Xhosa. Again, I have attempted to reduce this by working closely with the classroom teachers¹⁰

¹⁰ It is important to note that since the teachers were assisting me, the research for them also became an empowering experience as they were not merely being observed, but were also providing their input in the cooperative relationship.

involved who were able to assist me when necessary and by the assistance of two Xhosa speaking colleagues who worked with me both in the translations of the videotaped classroom observations and other translation work in connection with the study. This was also compensated by the fact that English is the de-facto language of the administrative and the educational sectors and by the willingness of those adults interviewed to use English (all students were interviewed in Xhosa with the help of my colleagues who assisted me in the interviews working as a translator between the students and myself).

Chapter 2. The South African Context

2.1 Sociopolitical history

Many historians of the white South African establishment start their history books with a brief reference to the voyage of Vasco de Gama round the Cape of Good Hope in 1497-98 and then rush on to the arrival of the first white settlers in 1652. Other historians are so committed to emphasizing the role of capitalism as the mold of modern Southern Africa that they ignore the processes that shaped society before Europeans began to intrude in the region (Thompson, 1990:1).¹¹

My intention in this chapter is not to ignore the pre-colonial period in South African history. However, given constraints in length I will not discuss this historical period¹² in detail. I will, on the other hand, discuss a number of issues that I consider significant to this study. In his book Thompson (1990) highlights the importance of this historical period and the sociopolitical context and how this may assist us in better understanding contemporary South Africa.

The pre-colonial history of Southern Africa is significant in its own right, providing examples of the constraints and possibilities, achievements and setbacks of preindustrial and preliterate communities as they establish their niches in a variety of environments. It is also significant as providing essential links in explaining what has followed. Indigenous Southern Africans were not tabula rasa for white invaders or capitalists to civilize or to victimize. Over many centuries, they had been developing social forms and cultural traditions that colonialism, capitalism, and apartheid have assaulted, abused, and modified but never eradicated. One cannot understand how Africans have endured the fragmentation of their family life by migrant labor unless one has knowledge of their customary social values and networks. Nor can one fathom the vigor of black resistance to the apartheid state without knowledge of pre-colonial African ideas about social and economic obligations of rulers and rights of subjects, and the basis of political legitimacy (Thompson, 1990:1-2).

¹¹ While some of the references used in this dissertation are descriptive others may be defined as normative. However, in attempting to understand, in particular, the sociopolitical context of South Africa it is essential also to use both these types of information in order to grasp as many aspects as possible.

¹² Thompson (1990:1-30) provides an excellent discussion of this historical period. Additionally, during the writing of this dissertation I found a vast amount of information available on South Africa's history. My account here is far from extensive. The object of this chapter is just to give a brief account and to focus on key issues relating to this study. For a detailed account into the history of South Africa cf Beinar & Dubow (1995), Beinar (1994) or Davenport (1991) as well as Thompson (1990).

In my search of the available literature for this historical framework I was struck by the reality of Thompson's argument that most historians disregard this historical period. Book titles¹³ that are available reflect this lack of consideration for the important pre-colonial period in South Africa's history, a period that shaped the society through centuries before the arrival of Europeans.

Understanding this historical period, however, is not an easy task given that the available evidence from this period expresses approximations, probabilities, and informed conjectures (Thompson, 1990). It was not until the nineteenth century that substantial descriptions of the societies in the interior of South Africa were produced and even then these had their limitations as outsiders with little knowledge of the societies they were describing often recorded them. Thompson (1990:2) also maintains that "it was not until the twentieth century that many Africans themselves began to write about their past." This should be considered when reading information about this period.

It is believed that by the beginning of the Christian era communities had lived in Southern Africa on hunting, fishing and collecting edible plants for thousands of years. The way of life varied depending on the various regions (coastal regions, deserts, grasslands and so on). It is believed that about the sixteenth century A.D., some people still lived in the arid and mountain areas by hunting and gathering plants while others lived along the Cape peninsula and maintained their communities through herding sheep and cattle. There were also people known as mixer farmers who not only owned sheep and cattle, but they also grew cereal crops and used spears and digging tools with iron tips (Thompson, 1990). The Europeans called the hunter-gathers Bushmen, the pastoralists Hottentots, and the mixed farmers Kaffirs and these names were all used in a derogatory sense. Thompson notes that it is now more appropriate to use ethnic terms as such hunter-gatherers are known as San, the pastoralists as Khoekhoe, and the Bantu-speaking mixed farmers as Africans.¹⁴

¹³ Some of the book titles that I came across at the UWC's library while in Cape Town are, for example, "Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa" (Beinart & Dubow, 1995), "Twentieth-Century South Africa" (Beinart, 1994), or "Southern Africa since 1800" (Denoon & Nyeko, 1984). Although I do not question the importance of these historical periods I agree with Thompson that the pre-colonial period is also important in helping in our understanding of contemporary life. Furthermore, I recognize that these are not all the titles available on the subject, but these titles give some indication of the focus in many of the books covering the history of South Africa.

¹⁴ Thompson (1990:18fn) asserts that the "Khoisan peoples were, of course, African; but I use the term African in a narrower sense to identify the mixed farming peoples who spoke Bantu languages and whose descendants are the vast majority of the inhabitants of modern South Africa". The preferred spelling is Khoesan and not

Thompson makes an interesting observation, which highlights much of the eurocentric thinking that has been applied to different societies without consideration of their appropriateness.

White scholars have not found it easy to account for the differences among these peoples. Until recently, white South Africans in particular assumed that “Bushmen,” “Hottentots,” and “Kaffirs” were pure racial types and that the basic process that lay behind the outcome was migration. In so doing, they were applying a model drawn from European history.... We now know that the migration model does not provide a sufficient explanation for the early history of Southern Africa. People *did* enter the region from the north, but the historical process was much more complex. There was continuity as well as change. Populations were not closed reproducing entities, equipped with unique unchanging culture. People interacted, cooperating and copulating as well as competing and combating, exchanging ideas and practices as well as rejecting them (Thompson, 1990:11).

Even within these groups there were exchanges of ideas for example, the mixed farming people also had similar cultures and closely related Bantu languages.¹⁵ Among the Bantu-speaking mixed farmers ideology also played an important role in their culture. “In initiation schools, the teachers instilled respect for the elders, for chiefly authority, and for established religious beliefs and rituals” (Thompson, 1990:27). This respect for elders among the Xhosa community is still very evident today.

Although my discussion of pre-colonial South Africa is far from extensive I believe I have given a brief insight into the period. I now turn my discussion to the historical period that most historians tend to begin their focus that is the arrival of the white man at the Cape peninsula.

Khoisan as Thompson (1990) uses. In addition, Khoekhoe is the preferred spelling (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and not Khoikhoi.

¹⁵ Thompson (1990) highlights the important role that cattle played in the Xhosa community and the vast vocabulary that was developed concerning cattle. For the Xhosa the cattle were the most prized possession of all and it was the main indicator of wealth. The Mpondo had roughly “fifty-seven different terms describing cattle of different markings, as well as five terms describing the horns” (Hunter, 1961:70). This is similar to the extensive vocabulary developed by the Icelanders to describe the horse (there are roughly 100 words that may be used to describe the horse). Other ethnic groups also have extensive vocabularies to describe things that are important in their communities.

2.1.1 The Cape colonial invasion

Originally the Dutch East India Company had intended the small settlement at the Cape of Good Hope to be nothing more than a stop over for annual fleets to and from Batavia (Djakarta). Here these fleets could take in fresh water, food and land their sick for recuperation (Thompson, 1990). During this period the Dutch also established trading relations with the local Khoekhoe pastoralists. As the number of attending ships increased, the Company's establishment grew even more complex. The number of administrators and soldiers increased and the demands for supplies grew as well. This resulted in local farming as well as trade relations with the local Khoekhoe herders. The first former employees of the Company were thus granted farming land in connection with the ever-expanding colony. The farmers also needed labor on their farms and thus slaves were deemed necessary. These slaves were brought mainly from Indonesia, India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) with a few from Madagascar and East Africa. Thus only a few slaves were actually African. Marks (1972:64) writes that a few local Khoekhoe worked as herders for the whites but in general they were not considered suitable slaves given that they "were a purely pastoral people who did not take easily to the idea of cultivating for others and, as slaves, could easily have deserted to the hinterland".

During this period most of the whites spoke Dutch (or Cape Dutch as it was known) even though not all the whites were Dutch. In fact the Dutch comprised roughly 45-50 percent of the total white population (Combrink, 1978) with the rest being Germans, French, Scandinavians, British and eastern European. However, since the Dutch East India Company was the one and only power holder at the Cape during this period Dutch became the dominant language, among the white population.

As the time passed the Khoekhoe realized that the white colonists were establishing more than just a re-supplying port. The relations between them and the white colonialists became strained. As the colony grew, the Khoekhoe became increasingly marginalized and as more land was being taken to accommodate the growing number of white farmers (also known as burghers or later the Boers) the Khoekhoe were pushed further from good grazing land for their cattle and from the important fresh spring waters. During this period there was also serious opposition and many armed conflicts erupted. While the Cape colonists socio-politically marginalized the Khoekhoe, the Colony itself became divided into two

sociopolitical spheres: a peninsular Colony, where the main central authority was located, and a peripheral free burgher society, over which central administration had no regular control (Maho, 1998).

During the French revolution the British occupied the Cape peninsula to prevent it from falling into French control (Thompson, 1990). In 1806 the British took permanent control of the Colony and the inherited society proved difficult to govern. Within the Dutch administration corruption had grown and the burghers had little respect for the officials of the Dutch East India Company. Although the British were less corrupt, resentment between the free burghers and the new colonial administration developed when the British began imposing laws and dispensing punishment (Lapping, 1986). During the period when the Dutch East India Company had administrative power they had little realistic power over the free burghers and as such a farmer “facing the prospect of an unfavorable judgment...could just move into the interior” (Lapping, 1986:33). On the other hand, the British sent out judges and judicial expeditions to travel all over the Colony in order to make sure that judgments were actually carried out.

Before continuing, it is important to briefly discuss the development of Afrikaans from Dutch or Cape Dutch as it was more commonly known. In searching the literature the development of the language is described in various ways, with some researchers mentioning the speed with which Cape Dutch developed into its own language. One of these researchers is Combrink (1978:71) who states that “Afrikaans, very much in the form that is known today, was in existence by 1800-1850”. Furthermore, in the literature there are, for the most part, two types of theories found (creolist and genetic)¹⁶ that are used to explain the development of Afrikaans. According to Valkhoff (1966; 1971), a creolist, Afrikaans developed through a normal creolization process. Thus the language began as a simplified contact language (a pidgin) that was used between various groups of people (for example, Dutch soldiers, sailors, Khoekhoe, herders and laborers, and the slave community of the Cape) with different mother

¹⁶ Those who are creolists contend that Afrikaans developed through a regular creolization process, which started out as a simplified contact language (a pidgin language) used between people from diverse language groups, which gradually developed into a more complex language from the influence of the different mother tongues. On the other hand, genetic theorists see Afrikaans as “the result of a spontaneous development of various seventeenth-century dialects of Dutch. Thus present-day Afrikaans is seen as the result of a natural and inherently motivated development that would have occurred regardless of the presence of other languages” (Maho, 1998:163). Maho (1998) argues that the motives of the genetic theorists are clearly political rather than linguistic.

tongues and it eventually developed into a more complex language under the influence of these different mother tongues (Traill, 1995). Traill (1995:6) discusses the influence the variety of Dutch spoken by the slaves, in particular, in the Western Cape had on the Khoe language spoken in the region as the Khoe had a close contact with this group, and whereby “the Khoe-Dutch was already engulfing Khoe”. He notes that the Khoe language did not disappear completely and that remnants of it still live on in the “Afrikaans lexicon in the form of many plant, animal and bird names” (Traill, 1995:6). Thus from a creolist viewpoint Afrikaans developed as a result of a mix of languages that grew out of the multilingual situation found in the Cape and under the influence of Cape Dutch.

The genetic argument considers Afrikaans to be the result of a more spontaneous development of various seventeenth-century dialects of Dutch. For these theorists present day Afrikaans “is seen as the result of a natural and inherently motivated development that would have occurred regardless of the presence of other languages” (Maho, 1998:163). Maho (1998:163) suggests that the genetic theorists want “to preserve the purity of Afrikaans as an Afrikaner language” by dismissing any outside influence on the language. Furthermore, Valkhoff (1971:463) makes a similar claim arguing that in their language struggle the linguists who assert a more purist view in the development of Afrikaans tend to transfer their “ideal of purity of the white race to their mother tongue and its history” and as a result attempt to negate the influence of other languages in the development of Afrikaans arguing that Afrikaans developed directly from Dutch and free from any foreign influence, except for a few loan words.

If we look at a more historical discussion regarding the development of Afrikaans, as opposed to a purely linguistic one, it is described as more politically motivated and thus more in line with the genetic theorists account. Historical writers such as Worden (1994:88) describe the development of Afrikaans as rooted in the “consciousness attempt by an elite class to stress social cohesion in the face of a process of industrialization and modernization over which it had little control”. One such group of elites, consisting of middle-class teachers and clerics in Paarl, founded the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* (Society of True Afrikaners) in 1875 “to stand for our language, our nation and our land” and they produced a newspaper and a history book written in Afrikaans as opposed to the standard Dutch of the time (Worden, 1994:88). This was the beginning of a number of movements to develop an Afrikaner ethnic identity and the Afrikaans languages as part of this identity against the background of a struggle for self-assertion of the Afrikaner people in response to the hegemony of the British.

What can be said about the development of Afrikaans is that “it seems...the published social and linguistic facts about Afrikaans have not been sufficiently studied together, as a package, to see what conclusions best fits them” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988:252).

Any account of language genesis at the Cape that follows from an asocial analytical framework ultimately runs the risk of becoming a neogrammarian fiction. Anything that follows from a framework that is not based on careful linguistic evaluation of the documentary evidence devolves into an exercise in mere speculation” (Roberge, 1995:85).

Thus in describing the development of Afrikaans it is necessary to consider both the linguistic and socio-political information available as it appears that both these factors had an influence on the development of the language.

Looking further at the historical developments in South Africa, racism and racial ideology are seen as significant issues. Although “scientific racism”¹⁷ did not emerge until early in the twentieth century, Marks and Trapido (1987:7) argue that in the late nineteenth century “it was simply assumed in everyday discourse of domination”. Furthermore these researchers maintain that:

It suffused a developing English-speaking South African identity, which assumed British ‘racial’ superiority and imperial mission and which produces a certain ambiguity in the relationship between settlers themselves. As the century wore on there was a growing tendency to see the non-English settlers, who were contemptuously referred to as ‘Boers’, as members of an ‘inferior race’ (Marks & Trapido, 1987:7).

Additionally this racism and racial ideology was also evident in the way the British viewed the African population, which was clearly evident in a speech given by Lord Milner, High Commissioner of South Africa in 1903:

The white man must rule because he is elevated by many, many steps above the black man...which it will take the latter centuries to climb and which it is quite possible that the vast bulk of the black population may never be able to climb at all...One of the strongest arguments why the white must rule is because that is the only possible means of gradually raising the black man, not to our level of civilization – which it is

¹⁷ This term is originally discussed by Saul Dubow (1987) in chapter 2 of the book edited by Marks and Trapido (1987). Scientific racism held that biological differences determined the natural capacities and destinies of racial groups. For a more detailed discussion of this see also Dubow (1995).

doubtful whether he would ever attain – but up to a much higher level than that which he at present occupies (cited in Marks & Trapido, 1987:7).

Thus in these words the seeds of segregation were planted and the effects were to be felt well into the next century. Meanwhile, in the last half of the nineteenth century it is estimated that roughly more than 400 000 immigrants arrived in South Africa, mostly from Great Britain (Thompson, 1990). The British settlers did not mix with the Afrikaners nor did they learn their language, unlike the previous European settlers. The British Governor even declared that English was to be introduced in the administration. The result of this was that English became a requirement for trade and commerce in the Colony (Lapping, 1986; Maho, 1998).

The areas of Transvaal, the Free State, Natal, and the Cape in 1910 established the original boundaries of South Africa. Under the Union the 1913 Natives Land Act was approved. The Act was intended to prevent Africans from buying land in areas designated as “white,” and to stop black tenants from living on farms unless they provided an annual minimum of ninety days labor to the landowner (Beinart, 1994). The Act also strived to prevent Africans from buying or leasing land outside of certain areas. These areas also known as reserves “established the principle of the ‘homelands’ of the apartheid era” (Worden, 1995:50). Through all of this the principle of land segregation was established.

Before moving on to the next era in South Africa’s history there is the need to draw attention to the issue of language policy¹⁸ leading up to 1910. The dominance of English initially began with the British occupation of the Cape in 1795 and 1806 (Thompson, 1990). It was clear that early on the British administration of the colony pursued an Anglicization policy, where “the British gradually asserted control over the entire colony, and in doing so emphasized British culture and institutions” (Thompson, 1990:68). This Anglicization policy was very clear in the cultural changes that took place and “although English was a foreign language for the Afrikaner population, by the 1830’s it alone was authorized for use in government offices, law courts, and public schools” (Thompson, 1990:68). It was at this point in history that the series of *taalstryde* (language struggles) fought by Afrikaners against the dominance of

¹⁸ A more detailed discussion of language policy developments in South Africa will be presented in chapter 6. Since critical discourse analysis is applied in analyzing the LiEP and its development (cf chapter 5 on methodology), this discussion is better situated after the presentation of my methodology chapter. Although I do acknowledge that the discussion could have been presented in this chapter as well.

English would begin, which is an important point in relation to this study and to the language policies that were to follow in the country's history.

The threat to Afrikaans spurred leaders in the community to renewed efforts to secure its place and an acute awareness of the taalstryd (language struggle) was created. Increasingly, language became a political issue and hostility to English developed in predominantly Afrikaans speaking communities (Lanham, 1978:21).

With the founding of the Union in 1910 the first official bilingual policy came into effect. In an attempt to unite the two rival white groups, English and Afrikaner (the Afrikaner identity replacing the Dutch in 1925) both English and Afrikaans became official languages (Smit, 1997).

2.1.2 The period of segregation

Segregation is viewed as the territorial and residential separation of peoples rooted in the idea that black and white communities "have different wants and requirements in the fields of social, cultural and political policy" (Legassick 1995 cited in Beinart & Dubow, 1995:44). The issue of segregation can be seen as dating back to the British colonial administration through the establishment of African reserves by way of the 1913 Natives Land Act. Deegan (2001:4) provides a comprehensive description of the racial categories in South Africa (cf box 2.1) and these categories are still very much in use today.

Definition Box 2.1: The peoples of Southern Africa

The San (Bushmen)¹⁹ communities occupied most of the southern African region. They were short in stature and lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. The San were displaced by the Khoikhoi (Hottentots) communities, who were nomadic pastoralists. The Khoikhoi had developed a pastoral culture by the time of European contact. In the Iron Age and until the fifteenth century AD, Bantu-speaking people migrated southwards, developing more complex community structures. In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck established a colony at the Cape of Good Hope to serve as a shipping port for the Dutch East India Company. The colonists were initially known as Boers and latterly as Afrikaners. Interbreeding occurred between the San, Khoikhoi and Afrikaners, which led to the formation of a new ethnic group known as the Cape coloureds. Indians were brought to the country as indentured workers. The racial categories Black African, coloured, Indian and white are still used today as a way of distinguishing different groups.²⁰

(Source: Deegan, 2001:4).

Under British control during the nineteenth century the African chiefs were responsible for maintaining control under local authority. Marks (1970) argues that the divide and rule policy under British colonial administration reflected racial perceptions. Deegan (2001:5) contends “notions of racial superiority formed part of the general pattern of colonial rule into the twentieth century”.

During the period of 1910 to 1948 the white population consolidated its control over the state while simultaneously strengthening its domination over the black population and eliminating the British government’s legal power to intervene in South African affairs (Beinart, 1994; Thompson, 1990). Segregation was certainly a major part of the apartheid plan as noted in the speech given by Verwoerd in 1948²¹ where he states “it [apartheid] is emphatically opposed

¹⁹ In this dissertation the terms San or ‘Bushman’ are used interchangeably since both names are utilized in the literature. Furthermore, this group is linguistically related to the Khoekhoe also referred to as the ‘Hottentots’, which carries with it a negative connotation and is referred to in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as a term used to describe “a person of inferior intellect and culture” (cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:198).

²⁰ Terminology concerning languages and social groups in South Africa is a minefield (Mesthrie, 1995), which I agree can make writing about language and ethnic groups in South Africa difficult. Thus I follow Mesthrie’s (1995:xix) standpoint concerning the volume edited by him where he argues “there is currently disagreement amongst contributors about the appropriateness of the scare quotes and lack of capitalization for the term coloured (which were meant to signify opposition to the apartheid label). For the sake of internal consistency and after much debate we [and myself included] have settled on *coloured* [I use the American English spelling *colored*], *white* and *black*”. Also I use the term black or African interchangeably to refer to black South Africans, as many of my informants use both terms to describe themselves. Furthermore, coloured (with the British spelling) may also be found in this dissertation, when specifically referencing the literature.

²¹ The source of this information is taken from a collection of original speeches by Dr. Verwoerd from 1948-1966 that are compiled in an edited book by Prof. Pelzer from the University of Pretoria and published in 1966. If possible the quotes by Dr. Verwoerd will be taken from this collection and cited according to the original date provided in the collection by Pelzer (1966) along with the page number(s) where the speech is located. However, the collection is not exhaustive and at times secondary sources are required in quoting the words of Verwoerd as many of his speeches are otherwise inaccessible.

to any mixture of blood between the European and the non-European races. It further declares itself in favor of territorial and political segregation of the Natives, as well as in favor of the separation between Europeans and non-Europeans in general in the residential and...in the industrial field” (Verwoerd, 1948:4). Thus in the apartheid plan segregation was seen as vital and it required a separate development for the white and black races with some contact necessary for purely economic reasons. Yet, support for this segregation was already clear in 1910.

Complete segregation of the two races is manifestly impossible, for geography and economics forbids it. But some degree of segregation is desirable, especially in the tenure of land, for the gulf between the outlook and civilization of the two colours (black and white) is so wide that too intimate an association is bad for both. For many years to come the two races must develop to a large extent on the lines of their own (Philip Keer, secretary of the Rhodes Trust, cited in Deegan, 2001:6).

Whites were dominant in every sector of the capitalist economy and the economic development of the country, particularly in mining industry, was dependent on cheap black labor. It has been argued that the categories of Race and Class corresponded and that generally black people, regardless of their ability, were subordinate to white people (Thompson, 1990). “Blacks did the manual work in the white household and the mining stope, the arable field, and the factory floor” (Thompson, 1990:155).

The manufacturing and mining industries applied similar principles of segregation in that whites were generally well-paid and had access to political power whereas blacks were poorly paid and without access to such power. Furthermore, in the mining industry to prevent thefts, the companies confined African workers in closed compounds and subjected them to intimate body searches before permitting them to leave. On the other hand, white workers were not subjected to these same conditions (Davenport, 1991; Deegan, 2001; Thompson, 1990).

Black South Africans employed a number of strategies to cope with their situation. Needless to say many were preoccupied with their day-to-day survival. In the reserves many families were spilt up by the periodic absence of men who would be away working in the mines or urban areas. During this time the women were left to maintain the domestic economy and raise the children. A number of Africans who had received a missionary education occasionally attempted to utilize the resentments of the black masses to counter white

hegemony²² (Davenport, 1991; Thompson, 1990). In 1912, Black Africans founded a nationwide organization that became known as the African National Congress (ANC). It was destined to become a formidable instrument of resistance in the second half of the century. By 1948 a number of trade unions had been examined and tested by the urban African workers, although the law excluded them from formal collective bargaining. Thompson argues that the tensions in the system increased during World War II.

Under wartime conditions, the economy expanded and diversified particularly rapidly, drawing more and more Africans into the urban labor market. Yielding to arguments that migrant labor, pass laws, and job color bars were inefficient as well as unjust, the government bent the job color bar, allowed black wages to rise at a faster rate than white wages, and temporarily relaxed the pass laws. It also recognized that Africans were a permanent part of the urban population and toyed with the idea of recognizing African trade unions. In those circumstances, a radical Afrikaner party managed to mobilize sufficient ethnic support to win a narrow victory in a general election in 1948 (Thompson, 1990:157).

2.1.3 During apartheid

In 1948 the Nationalist government inherited a segregated system that was beginning to collapse. However, the government was determined to change this trend thus maintaining white supremacy in postwar South Africa. Much of the early legislation coordinated and extended the racial laws of the segregation era and strengthened the administration of those laws. The term *apartheid* was quickly transformed from a political slogan to a more drastic systematic program of social engineering (Beinart, 1994; Beinart & Dubow, 1995; Davenport, 1991; Thompson, 1990). It was Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd²³ who was the leading architect behind this development.

During Verwoerd's term as prime minister of South Africa, apartheid became the most notorious form of racial domination that the postwar world has known. This continued with his successor B. J. Vorster from 1966 to 1978. Beinart (1994) describes the ultimate ideology

²² See 4.2.2 for a discussion of the concept of hegemony.

²³ Verwoerd's background had a great effect on the development of his beliefs and ideas. Furthermore, Thompson argues that Verwoerd identified passionately with the Afrikaners, which significantly influenced his ideas (cf Davenport, 1991 or Thompson, 1990 for this background information as space limitations do not permit this discussion here).

behind segregation and apartheid in which the ultimate goal was one of domination and wealth.

Segregation to 1948, and apartheid afterwards, were policies aimed not simply at separating white from black, but regulating the way in which the indigenous population was drawn into a new society. Economically, blacks were essential as peasants, workers, and farm tenants; politically the settler state tried to exclude them. The country's relative peace for nearly three-quarters of a century was achieved at the cost of deep division of power, race, and wealth. White power in South Africa was more efficient and more uncompromising than in many other colonial contexts (Beinart, 1994:3).

Ultimately, apartheid was embedded in the terms of "separate development," ethnic and racial segregation, which entailed the forced removal of millions of people to designated tribal "homelands"(Bantustans) under the 1950 Group Areas Act (GAA); the creation of "group areas" in towns and cities; the segregation of schools, churches, and public amenities; the establishment of separate structures for the governance of the country at every level and in almost every domain; and the imposition of restrictions on interpersonal relations such as marriage and sexual intercourse (Beinart, 1994; Davenport, 1991). The outcome of this Act in the urban areas was that most black people then came to live on the outer peripheries of cities often separated from white areas by industrial zones, open spaces or highways.²⁴

Beinart (1994) refers to the arguments by some academics in the 1970s that believed the maintenance of the migrant labor system could be considered the epitome of apartheid.

Migrant labour...had proved cheap for the mining industry because employers did not have to pay a wage which would support a whole urban family. Now the government hoped to extend its benefits to the growing manufacturing sector...the Nationalists wished to restore the crumbling economies of the African reserves, but this was insufficient in itself. Tight 'influx' controls were designed to check urban growth and inhibit the development of a black urban working class. Some industry would be moved away from the cities. Labour-hungry commercial farmers would benefit as workers would be bottled up in the rural areas. [Additionally] an extension of migrancy would also help protect white workers (Beinart, 1994:150).

As a result of forced removals the population of the Bantustans during the 1960s increased by 70 per cent, while at the same time the population in the African townships were essentially

²⁴ The legacy of apartheid policy is still apparent even today with many of the townships located in such areas. For example, the schools in this investigation are located in townships that lie along the stretch of highway leading out of Cape Town alongside the main airport and close to industrial zones.

reduced (Worden, 1994). Thus between 1960 and 1983 roughly 3.5 million people were relocated under the GAA (Worden, 1994). These forced removals were the most vicious symbol of the state's power over the lives of black people. It is important here to briefly mention the difference between the townships and the Bantustans. Townships evolved from the consciously designed and deliberately developed labor camps by apartheid-ruled South Africa and are now seen as urban or semi-urban communities where the majority of the black population still lives. Historically in "white South Africa" blacks were seen as temporary residents and their "legitimate" homes were seen as being in the reserves (officially referred to as homelands). The Native Land Act No. 26 of 1913 had demarcated areas for the sole occupation of blacks outside of which they were not permitted to acquire land.

Since African [black] townships are not "Bantu Areas", unless situated in a Reserve, but the property of the European municipalities of which they are the satellites, Africans cannot acquire freehold property there" (Hill, 1964:6).

Thus the initial understanding of a township was connected to the right to own land, a right that blacks did not have in the "white cities". However, the apartheid plan eventually proposed "urban African townships" to be located in the reserves and saw them as "independent native townships" (Verwoerd, 1956:138). Here the government was attempting to alter the initial conception of the townships from the labor camps located in the "white cities" to urban or semi-urban communities located in the homelands as well.

Alternatively a Bantustan is a territory that was set aside under apartheid for black South Africans and slated for eventual independence. Ten Bantustans (later generally referred to as homelands), covering 14% of the country's land, were created from the former "native reserves". Four were proclaimed independent—Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977), Venda (1979), and Ciskei (1981) – but no foreign government recognized them as independent nations. Citizens of independent homelands lost the limited rights they had as South Africans. Under the South African constitution that was approved in 1993 and ended white rule, South African citizenship was restored to homeland residents, and the homelands were abolished. Thompson (1990) provides a more detailed discussion of the homeland situation which I will now present.

In 1951 the government abolished the only official countrywide African institution, the Native Representative Council. A regrouping of the reserves into eight and eventually ten territories followed this government policy. Thompson (1990:191) states:

Each such territory became a “homeland” for a potential African “nation,” administered under white tutelage by a set of Bantu authorities, consisting mainly of hereditary chiefs. In its homeland an African “nation” was to “develop along its own lines,” with all the rights that were denied it in the rest of the country...

The Transkei was the pacesetter for this process. The government made it “self-governing” in 1963 and “independent” in 1976. Bophuthatswana followed in 1977, Venda in 1979, and Ciskei in 1981. As they became “independent,” their citizens were deprived of their South African citizenship.

The major problem with the Homelands was first that no other country recognized the homelands as independent nations, as already mentioned. Secondly the Homelands remained economically disadvantaged and the conditions under apartheid continued to deteriorate. These Homelands generally consisted of several pieces of land often separated by white-owned farms (Thompson, 1990), which were situated often on the most fertile parts of the land leaving only dry infertile areas for the Africans. Thus the incentives for Africans to leave the Homelands as permanent residents in urban areas or as migrant laborers increased continually.

2.1.3.1 From squatter camps and shantytowns to townships

The efforts made by the South African government to manipulate space and resettle people to secure *their* kind of apartheid city were not without its obstacles. One obstacle was civil unrest, which was a direct result of the manipulation of space.

Another challenge to the controlled features of the ideal apartheid city, something the government worked vigorously to develop, was the existence of unplanned settlements, often referred to as shantytowns or squatter camps.²⁵ It was estimated that in 1977 approximately

²⁵ The term shantytown or squatter camps are not meant here in any derogatory way. Rather these terms are used to highlight the way these settlements were viewed during the apartheid era and how they eventually developed from illegal- to legal settlements.

between one-fifth and one-quarter of all the inhabitants of greater Cape Town²⁶ were living in such areas (Western, 1996). As Western (1996:278) maintains “the settlements’ peripheral distribution around the metropolis (that is, at a “safe” distance from the White core of the city) does not mean that they [were] not a threat or a problem” in the eyes of the apartheid government. Most of these settlements were built on land zoned for other purposes or unproclaimed land. These settlements were referred to by the government as “the squatting evil” (Cape Times 10 August, 1977 cited in Western, 1996:278) that had to be eradicated in order to maintain the pristine apartheid city. Western (1996) argues that the immediate cause of the existence of these settlements was the shortage of housing. The problem was the lack of “official” housing for the majority black population, which was only allowed to be built on prescribed government-owned land. The situation of squatters was also dealt with differently in relation to the coloureds and the blacks.

Even in the difficult-to-administer “illegal” squatter situation, apartheid’s distinction between coloureds and Black Africans renders the experiences of the two groups at the hands of the law somewhat different. Until about April 1975...nearly all [the settlements] were characterized by various degrees of mixing between Black Africans and coloureds. At the same time, however, under the Divisional Council’s probing, Black Africans throughout the Cape Peninsula were urged to quit the camps where they were living among the coloured people and move to Crossroads. This, many did: Crossroads became an almost wholly Black African squatter camp (Western, 1996:279).

The Council inspectors appeared to have rounded up the black Africans from a number of squatter camps located on the fringes around Cape Town. The inspectors informed these residents that they could rebuild their dwellings again at Crossroads, an area specially designated for them (Reynolds, 1983). In a moving article, Josette Cole (1986)²⁷ uses the voices of the African women who recall the early years in Crossroads in which she highlights their plight as a result of forced removals. One woman recalls the events in late 1974:

²⁶ I will limit my discussion to the city of Cape Town since the townships where this investigation was conducted is in the greater Cape Town area. However, the similarities in the development of these townships from shantytowns or squatter camps are comparable to the developments that took place in other major cities during this same period. This investigation takes place in three different townships located in the Cape Town area (cf chapter 5 for a detailed discussion) and due to constraints of length I will limit my discussion mainly to the development of Crossroads, as the literature for this township is more accessible. Furthermore, the development of the townships is not the focus of this investigation, but I believe that it was important to provide this brief background information.

²⁷ Cole (1986) provides a detailed account tracing the origins of Crossroads and the role played by the women of Crossroads in its struggle. Here the voices of the women recall the struggle and hardships they faced.

We went to Browns Farm and found a 'coloured' man there, Wilhelm, who worked with my husband...he gave us permission to build an extension to his house. We had 3 rooms and it was really nice...It belong [sic] to the 'coloureds' but they didn't mind blacks living²⁸ there...

One night we heard someone arranging a meeting for all the blacks. Usually there were no meetings at Brown's Farm...It was just freedom...We were told at the meeting that during the day white men had come to say that all blacks must move out. We asked, 'But where to?'. We were told they had said Crossroads. 'But where is this Crossroads?' We were told the man had just pointed down Landsdowne Road. Nobody did know where it was...

After two days they came back and gave us notices – then they took us. My aim was not to go, but it was a force for us to go. They told us we would live nicely there, just like Brown's Farm. Unfortunately when we came there it was just a bush...There were less than 15 black families there. Lots of place to see where you wanted to put your house. But there were no taps, no toilets, nothing. It was really a shock to us (Cole, 1986:15-16).

Reynolds (1983), however, has another view of Crossroads during these early years. She argues that the Bantu authorities evidently saw this as a transit camp and not a permanent township, which could also explain the lack of basic facilities described above. In her research Reynolds records the continual attempts by the government to "clear Crossroads" and after each attempt groups of residents went to the Advice Office²⁹ to ask for assistance. "Hopefully, but acutely insecure and with urgent awareness of some basic human right to peaceful dwelling with their families and within reach of a livelihood, these people have shown remarkable community spirit and courageous determination to pull together" (Reynolds, 1983:497).

Thus these shantytowns developed as a result of the necessity of black Africans to sell their labor to the whites as the native reserves were unable to provide subsistence for an increasing population. In urban areas black African labor was needed and simultaneously their presence in the towns was not wanted. The establishment of the *Coloured Labour Preference Area*, which gave the coloreds job priority, also restricted black Africans working in Cape Town. Those people who were classified as colored persons had their origins concentrated in the Western Cape, which is still prevalent even today. The government attempted to perpetuate this pattern by giving automatic preference to colored people seeking work in that area. This

²⁸ This woman is then describing the mixed communities as discussed by Western (1996).

²⁹ This office was run jointly by Black Sash and the South African Institute of Race Relations (Reynolds, 1983:506n).

policy also caused considerable conflicts between coloreds and black Africans and this is still somewhat evident in the Western Cape (for an interesting history of the colored population in Cape Town cf Western, 1996). Furthermore, the migrant system was intended to reduce the number of black Africans in the “white cities”. It was the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act that tightly controlled the influx of black Africans to the cities. Under the law a man had only fourteen days in the “white city” to find work; if he found no work, he had to return to the homelands. This time limit was further reduced to only three days in 1952. As a result, all black Africans whose origins go back to those homelands, and this was most black Africans, were officially considered “foreigners” in “white South Africa”. Anyone violating this law was subject to prosecution and it is estimated that between 1975-76 a total of 381,858 black Africans were prosecuted under this Pass law (Western, 1996). Under the law women and children had to qualify in their own right. Thus a husband who qualified under this law (a man could qualify under two different subsections of the law) was not permitted to bring his family and they were only able to reside with him under “lawful entry” in areas designated by the government (Thompson, 1990; Beinart, 1994; Western, 1996).

The government’s monopoly over all *legal* accommodations for black Africans allowed the government the opportunity to simply refuse to provide *family* housing and as a result lawful entry to families could be denied. The failure of the government to provide such housing for those families in the city lawfully was already apparent in 1975 where a shortage of 1,440 *lawful* dwellings for black African families in Cape Town was recorded (Granelli, 1977). This left many residents no other alternative than to build their own dwellings around Cape Town, thus increasing the development of shantytowns. In her research Reynolds (1983) describes this vividly along with the hardships and determination by many of the early Crossroads residents and their defiance against the apartheid government and their inhuman treatment of the black Africans.

It is found that some people who have put up shacks at Crossroads have done so simply because they cannot find the lodging to which they are entitled in the overcrowded townships. Many more houses are needed for people who are lawfully here on a permanent basis, and clearly such people have the first claim on housing schemes. But few indeed are those with no good reason in term of plain humanity for being here, and the picture which comes through is a facet of our inflationary times. It is one of extreme need in impoverished rural areas, with hunger, fear and loneliness driving the women to seek out their menfolk where the jobs are, and where they can reach hospitals for their ailing children...

In the words of an elderly resident of Crossroads: "I have been in Cape Town a long time and never have I seen such hardship as now. The inspectors keep saying that the husbands must be arrested because they have no permission to be in Crossroads. How can a wife be separated from her husband?" (Reynolds, 1983:497-499).

Reynolds continues to describe the constant battles that the residents of Crossroads fought with the government in their attempt to keep their dwellings from being demolished and to keep their families together. What began in 1975 as a transit camp³⁰ in the government's eyes developed into a permanent township in 1980 (Reynolds, 1983; Henderson, 1999). Plans were laid in 1979 to build a new township for some of these residents and from this township grew a new township known as New Crossroads (Kiewiet & Weichel, 1980; Reynolds, 1983).³¹ As Henderson (1999:9) states "the suburb of New Crossroads was built by the *apartheid* state in response to a bitter struggle by the women and men of Old Crossroads and other shanty towns for right to residence". In her research Henderson asserts that many of the families that she worked with in New Crossroads came there from Old Crossroads between 1980 and 1985. Negotiations with the residents of Old Crossroads began with the intervention of Piet Koornhof.³² Koornhof informed the residents of Old Crossroads that they would be moved to "a proper Crossroads with the blessing of almighty God" (Cole, 1987 cited in Henderson, 1999:10). However, he was also not able to guarantee that all the residents in Old Crossroads, which were originally estimated at about 20,000, but were in the region of 40,000 to 50,000, would receive housing in the New Crossroads. Initially the state built 2,575 living units in the new township. Through negotiations between the apartheid state and the squatter leadership the unity of the group broke down and internal conflicts erupted as a result (Henderson, 1999). Thus by 1981, Crossroads was reportedly the only one left standing of the original African squatter settlements of apartheid Cape Town (Crossroads, Unibel, Modderdam and Werkgenot: cf Cole, 1986 and Henderson, 1999). It represented a victory for the determination of the Xhosa-speaking African population to return to the Western Cape, from where they had been originally removed in the clearances of the 1950s. However, Crossroads was not at first upgraded in the usual sense. Instead, the shacks were replaced with private housing for sale, and the original population, either evicted or left stranded unable to afford

³⁰ However, the stories provided in Cole (1986) show this beginning already in 1974.

³¹ Given space constraints I will only briefly describe the development of this township. For a detailed discussion see Henderson (1999). The schools involved in this investigation are located in Crossroads and New Crossroads as well as Khayelitsha, a more recent township that has developed, which is located further out from the city center than the other two. Additionally, it may be noted that Khayelitsha has grown into a much larger township than the other two (cf chapter 5 for the demographics of these townships).

³² At that time he was the minister of the Department of Plural Relations, which was a state department that attempted to control and liaise with the African people (Henderson, 1999).

the new houses, was displaced to a great extent. So far as the Crossroads squatter population of the period of struggle in the 70s and 80s survives, its members are located largely in New Crossroads and in Khayelitsha, especially at Site B. It is reported (Cole, 1986; Henderson, 1999) that the first people to arrive in Khayelitsha were displaced refugees from Crossroads and in 1980-81 a large number of people were moved out of the shack areas of Old Crossroads into New Crossroads. Subsequently, in 1985-86, as many as 30-35 000 Crossroads squatters are believed to have moved to Khayelitsha (Henderson, 1999).

In the midst of the struggles between the residents of Crossroads and the government, the boycotts and the internal conflicts, this community was able to open two schools in order to educate their children. The first of the two schools, Noxolo (meaning peace) opened in June 1976 with two teachers and twenty pupils, which increased to two hundred pupils two months later (Reynolds, 1983). The other school³³ named Sizamile opened in May 1978. The number of schools currently in Old Crossroads³⁴ is two primary schools and two high schools. In New Crossroads there are three primary schools. In Khayelitsha there are a total of thirty-seven primary schools and sixteen high schools. The schools found in this study are located in what is referred to as Old Crossroads, New Crossroads and Khayelitsha respectively. Despite the opening of these two schools (Noxolo and Sizamile) the education that was available during apartheid was simply not tolerated.

For the residents of the townships the apartheid education system was also the site of struggle and it was not imposed without considerable opposition, which was overt and took the form of organized resistance.

...independence of mind could not be eliminated. Rather, by default, it was channeled into political action. A generation of children spent their youths challenging the political system under the slogan "Liberation Now! Education Later!" Perhaps it was necessary, and it was certainly understandable, but the costs, among the genuine costs of apartheid, were enormous (Ross, 1999:162).

³³ Neither of these two schools are part of this project. My intention here is to show that despite the conflicts that existed in the community during this period the residents did manage to open these two schools in order to educate the youth in the community.

³⁴ This township is referred to as Crossroads and Old Crossroads.

Thus the periodic student revolts, protests and class boycotts, which were in reaction to the poor quality of schooling within Bantu Education and its underlying ideology led to what some see as a breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning (Fataar, 1997).

2.1.4 South Africa and the struggle for liberation

The year 1978 marked the beginning of the end for the apartheid state. Following the increased economic growth of the 1960s and early 1970s South Africa, like much of the rest of the world, was hit by economic recession. The administration of the complex network of apartheid rules and regulations also proved to be extremely costly; with inflation being more than 10 percent (Thompson, 1990). When the new Prime Minister, P. W. Botha, assumed control in 1979, he continued the initiatives to modify apartheid without changing the basic system. Before the previous Prime Minister, Vorster, resigned after a number of major government financial scandals (Worden, 1994), steps were taken to end segregation in some hotels, theaters, buses and beaches, and to allow some private schools to admit pupils of more than one race. In December 1979 the permit system for admission to public facilities was relaxed so that clubs, hospitals, libraries and restaurants could obtain exemptions from segregation laws. Later that year Pretoria accepted the results of the Wiehahn Report, a commission appointed by Botha, which recommended that blacks be allowed to join registered trade unions and that the job reservation system be terminated (Worden, 1994). Independent trade unions were quickly created and blacks were admitted to apprenticeship programs for skilled jobs. The government also allowed blacks in Townships to own homes; have more involvement in local administration; granted approval to white businesses to form minority business partnerships with blacks and formed a development corporation to encourage small black, colored and Indian businesses (Ross, 1999; Thompson, 1990). These programs were designed to enhance the formation of a stable black middle class which could be enlisted as allies of the system. Furthermore, the decolonization process intended by Verwoerd had failed both to alleviate foreign criticism and to provide the means for black Africans to develop “along their own lines” in the Homelands. As Thompson (1990:222) contends:

The client rulers of the Homelands were becoming an embarrassment. Utterly dependent on Pretoria for subsidies and protection, most of them were corrupt, inefficient, and authoritarian. Their territories were decaying and their inhabitants were struggling to survive by sending their family members out to work in the white cities and on the white farms. As workers and consumers, black people were developing economic and political muscle in the heart of “white” South Africa, and their children had come to loathe the regime and its institutions. Young Indians and Coloureds as well as Africans regarded the regimes as illegitimate. They were not deferential towards whites; they were defiant.

The South African government also faced a transformed world order. Instead of being at the southern end of a continent controlled by Europeans, in a world dominated by Europeans and North Americans, South Africa had become an isolated anomaly. Except for Rhodesia [Zimbabwe] and Namibia, its neighbors were no longer European colonies but black states. The white minority in Rhodesia was losing its war against African guerrillas. The United Nations had declared South Africa’s control of Namibia illegal and in 1978 devised a program to liberate that territory.

Within its borders the apartheid government faced heavy opposition from several different organizations.³⁵ South Africa was in the grip of an increasingly totalitarian state which had massacred peaceful protesters at Sharpeville in 1960 and then detained thousands in a State of Emergency and banned the black majority’s main political parties (the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress – the Communist Party had already been banned in 1950). Liberal thinking whites were few in number and what protests they could rally were drowned out by “anti-communist” propaganda, suppressed by punishment without trial for serious political opposition.

Within the broader anti-apartheid struggle the student organizations and trade unions were extremely prominent. In 1969, Black students constituted the South African Students’ Organization (SASO) led by Steve Biko. It was influenced by the Black Consciousness movement of the 1960s based on the ideology of Africanism and Marxist (but not Communist) socialism. It was initially tolerated by the apartheid state because it was for black students only. Precisely because overt political opposition was suppressed, much of the energy of those within the country who sought to oppose apartheid was inevitably channeled into forms of resistance that were given some slight sanctuary in churches and universities and which were less obviously rebellious challenges.

³⁵ An in-depth discussion of these organizations will not be presented, given space limitations. The current situation in South Africa will only be dealt with briefly in order to highlight the context in which this investigation is located. For a more detailed discussion of the struggle for liberation of Beinart (1994), Beinart and Dubow (1995), Deegan (2001), or Worden (1994, 1995).

The ANC was one of the organizations,³⁶ which developed among the African intelligentsia and it would become one of the leading organizations in the struggle against apartheid. In 1949³⁷ the ANC Youth League's Programme of Action was adopted by the organization. The Programme of Action called for strikes, boycotts and a defiance campaign against the apartheid government's oppressive legislation. The defiance campaign called for "national freedom" and political independence from white domination. Furthermore, all forms of segregation were rejected by the organization. Deegan (2001) notes that the campaign also created closer cooperation between the ANC and the South African Indian Congress and in 1952 these two organizations came together and launched a passive resistance campaign (Thompson, 1990). In 1955 the ANC formed a coalition representing a broad spectrum of South African society to organize a campaign to enlist participation of the black masses and to elicit sympathy from the outside world. In that same year the ANC convened a Congress of the people³⁸ (this included organizations from all the racial groups). During this meeting held in an open space at Kliptown near Johannesburg they adopted the Freedom Charter.³⁹ The Freedom Charter remained a "benchmark of opposition to apartheid into the 1990s" (Worden, 1994:105). The Freedom Charter called for equal access to health, education and legal rights. It is interesting to note that many of the statements found in the Freedom Charter are reflected in the interim 1993 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in the subsequent 1996 Constitution. Thus the document can be seen as playing a key role in many of the ensuing policies in the New South Africa.

³⁶ Another influential organization the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was formed in 1959 and was led by Robert Sobukwe. It was a breakaway organization of the more radical ANC members that wanted a purely African movement as opposed to the ANC's desire for reconciliation between the races in South Africa (Karis & Gerhart, 1977). The PAC was responsible for inaugurating an anti-pass campaign in 1960 that led to the Sharpeville massacre on March 21, 1960. At the police station at Sharpeville, near Johannesburg, the police opened fire on the crowd that had gathered at the station without passes. A total of 67 Africans were killed and 187 wounded most of who were shot in the back as they were running away. The PAC had invited the ANC to join the campaign, but the ANC refused. The *Sunday Times* reported the response from the ANC, before the massacre, in a letter from Duma Nokwe which stated that the ANC was unwilling to support an action that "had not been properly prepared for, and which has no reasonable prospects of success" (cited in Karis & Gerhart, 1977:332). This was the turning point in the history of South Africa as the ANC's policy of non-violence was to change and many of the leaders of both the ANC and PAC were jailed (cf Beinart, 1994; Karis & Gerhart, 1977).

³⁷ In 1949 the annual conference elected three members of the Youth League to the national executive: Walter Sisulu (b. 1912), Oliver Tambo (b. 1917), and Nelson Mandela (b. 1918). All three were from the Transkei and had attended mission schools. Both Tambo and Mandela had been expelled from Fort Hare, but they had later qualified as lawyers by correspondence at the University of South Africa.

³⁸ According to Thompson (1990:208) the breakdown of the delegates was as follows: over 2,000 Africans, 320 Indians, 230 coloreds, and 112 whites.

³⁹ I will not present the contents of the Freedom Charter here; instead see Deegan (2001:29) for the full document.

Actual political work by blacks was very difficult during apartheid, but educational activities made use of the cracks in the system of repression to survive and, indeed, flourish. Effective political organizing was also made more difficult by the increasing refusal of the activists in the South African Students Organization (SASO) to engage in any multi-racial activities. SASO advised white students that they should change white people's consciousness while they dealt with black consciousness (Biko, 1979). In 1972 the Black People's Convention was launched with an emphasis on the psychological and physical liberation of black people. A number of community education and development projects were initiated by the organization. However, it did not survive as it failed to gain a large membership, limited by inadequate funding and by the reluctance of many to be involved with an overtly political movement. This vindicated the view held by Steven Biko that black people had to first be liberated from fear as a result of black inferiority induced by years of white oppression (Biko, 1979). SASO led by Biko attempted to produce black people who did "not regard themselves as appendages to white society" (Biko, 1979:51).

Apart from its political fallout, the Soweto uprising led to a considerable rethinking about education (cf 2.2.1 for more discussion concerning Soweto and education). As on previous occasions, the government struck back against the protesters and almost a thousand people were gunned down during the Soweto uprising, and in 1977 trade union activists were detained and banned as was the South African Students' Organization (SASO) and 18 other related organizations. While state repression intensified there was also a recognition by both government and the business sector that reforms were necessary, some of them in relation to schooling and others in relation to labour regulations. For example, various modest reforms took place in black education and the Department of Bantu Education, which in 1979 became the Department of Education and Training in an attempt to neutralize the term *Bantu Education* (Heugh, 2002).

The eighties began with indications of reform, although some of the pressure for reform came from within South Africa and particularly from the psychological shock that the Soweto revolt had given to the powers-that-be, the real pressure, however, was coming from a changing world in which the West's toleration, and indeed avid support, of anti-Communist dictatorships in Latin America, Africa and the rest of the world was beginning to diminish and economic sanctions against South Africa began to sink in (Legassick, 2002).

In the 1980s large-scale union affiliations were being formed through political allegiances with the largest being the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) launched in 1985, the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU) were more in tune with black consciousness, and in 1986 the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA) was established under the Inkatha movement (Ross, 1999). From this point the unions were at the forefront of the political struggle in the country. During this period the context of popular resistance and mobilization exceeding those of the 1950s and 1976-77 was heightened. Worden (1994:127-128) argues that at this point the Botha government made attempts to:

...restructure apartheid rather than to dismantle it, and that the African [black] majority would continue to be permanently excluded from central government. White control would be entrenched but the state hoped that the new system would be more acceptable both locally and internationally. New oppositional organizations emerged to demonstrate the fallacy of this belief.

In 1985 the local campaigns through a series of bus and rent boycotts, school protests and worker stay-aways were succeeding and these township protests began to spread throughout the country. Furthermore, by late 1985 both popular resistance and state repression had reached new heights. The resistance of the mid-1980s appeared to destroy the “total strategy” plans of the Botha government. Following the so-called “Rubicon speech” delivered by P. W. Botha at the Natal National Party Congress in Durban on 15 August 1985, which firmly rejected any notion of majority rule or response to foreign pressure, the loans granted by foreign banks in 1982 were immediately called in and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange was temporarily closed (Ross, 1999; Worden, 1994).

With the total collapse of “total strategy”, the government seemed bankrupt of ideas, relying on internal repression and international bravado. In May 1986 a high-ranking Commonwealth delegation (a concession granted to Thatcher by Commonwealth leaders) arrived in South Africa to investigate the situation and talk to the government. But while the delegation was still in the country, its visit was undermined by South African raids on supposed ANC bases in Harare, Lusaka and Gaborone. International condemnation rose to still greater heights, and even Thatcher was appalled (Worden, 1994:135-36).

This led to a series of events and included the banning of many organizations, resulting in the only legal voice of opposition coming from the churches and Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu (Worden, 1994). Finally in late 1989 Botha was forced to step down on the demand of the members of his Cabinet and he was replaced by F. W. de Klerk.

In September 1989 president de Klerk took office. Soon after he announced that a political solution and not a military one would be sought to meet the demands of black opponents (Deegan, 2001). In 1990 de Klerk announced that he was unbanning the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the PAC among other subsidiary organizations (cf Deegan, 2001 appendix 2 for the verbatim report of F. W. de Klerk's speech to Parliament on February, 1990). This speech, along with the release of Nelson Mandela on February 11, 1990 from Verster Prison in Paarl would dramatically change the political scene in South Africa and eventually lead to the first democratic elections in the history of South Africa on April 27, 1994. The result of these elections would see the ANC gaining a huge electoral victory, with 62.6 percent, along with the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the National Party (NP) combined gaining over 30 percent of the total vote (Deegan, 2001). Deegan asserts that enormous difficulties faced the government of national unity (GNU) during the transition period and that:

Together with the newly elected President Mandela, the former president, F. W. de Klerk, and Chief Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party in the cabinet...The former ANC deputy secretary general felt that the government played a crucial mediatory role and acted as a force between conflicting interests. The spirit of the government at that time was one of 'reconciliation' in providing a 'culture of negotiation'. Even former president F. W. de Klerk admitted that for the first couple of years the new cabinet 'functioned surprisingly smoothly'.

Most of the MPs who entered parliament in the aftermath of the April 1994 elections had not planned for it. Apart from those who served earlier tricameral structures, most came with no direct parliamentary experience, having not had the chance to participate in the political life of the country...The new democratic parliament was filled with people who had either returned from political exile or imprisonment, or fought in South Africa during the years of struggle...it was a very mixed environment in terms of members' political experience (Deegan, 2001:114).

The society inherited by the GNU and, in particular the ANC, was characterized by deep socio-economic division, where millions of people, mainly black⁴⁰ Africans, were victims of abject poverty who were denied access to jobs, land, homes, politics, education, health or opportunities for self-advancement. "The asymmetrical nature of South Africa's development under apartheid produced a first/third world society" (Deegan, 2001:115) within the same

⁴⁰ Although other ethnic groups were also denied access to many of the same basic needs and rights as black Africans, the blacks as a group suffered the denial of these rights and access to basic needs the most of any ethnic group both before and during apartheid.

country. Thus both the economy and the society needed to be transformed if the vision of the ANC of non-racialism, development, and equity was to be realized.

2.2 Education in South Africa

The organized education of the youth of a community is part and parcel of the culture of the community; without culture...there is no education; and without education,...no culture and no community. When one talks of education, therefore, one is also inevitably talking of community culture and cultural communities (Ruperti, 1976:3).

Historically in South Africa the social structures were maintained by the education provided by individual societal groups. Whether formal or informal, education throughout the world has varied according to the society for which it is designed. Pre-colonial education in South African societies emphasized work skills, social and political responsibility along with spiritual and moral values (Keto, 1990; Ndilula, 1988).

Children's education was participatory in that they learned by doing and observing their elders. Their intellectual abilities were challenged during the evenings through the use of riddles and proverbs (Brock-Utne, 2000a). Those deemed intelligent were able to outwit others through the clever use of this medium (Ndilula, 1988). Furthermore, the informal nature of this pre-colonial education did not indicate a lack of education, in truth the education was very functional, and the curriculum was relevant to these societies in that it satisfied the necessity of passing on knowledge and information from one generation to the next.

With the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 the process of socialization and education for the children in these societies began to change (cf 6.2 for a discussion of the first school for blacks). This initial education was generally provided through missionaries, who began a steady process of converting and "civilizing" the black population through formal instruction. The education that would follow would become more formal in nature and could be referred to as "Western education". Keto (1990:22-23) maintains that before 1880 four distinct themes dominated education policy and practice in South Africa.

1. The definition of education, which according to UNESCO's *International Standard Classification of Education* may be briefly summarized as the "transmission of a heritage from one generation to another". Keto (1990) argues that the indigenous South African societies already had education in this sense long before 1652.
2. The Western type of education otherwise known as "schooling" began with the arrival of the Dutch.
3. The early dominant role of religious institutions in the "new" educational process and the subsequent change in control of education to missionary institutions, which provided the main formal educational opportunities for the African and coloured population.
4. The emergence of state-supported education for the whites, which emerged out of a "colonial context" that adopted policies, values and priorities of external government agencies. This state-supported education was mainly influenced by European ideas of education.

Keto (1990:24) asserts, "educational policy reflecting Western values affected white South Africans differently from black South Africans from the very beginning". However, he also maintains that "South Africa's (Western) educational system was...quintessentially "colonial" and derivative in its ideology; its philosophical foundation and the rationale for its policies and practices were centered outside South Africa" (Keto, 1990:24). Other researchers have laid similar claims in referring to the external influences in South African education, but these have mainly been concerned with the white population and with black South Africans or other ethnic groups (Malherbe, 1925: 25-26).

Thus, from the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 until the year 1910, the main initiatives in the provision of education for the majority population (the black Africans) had come from the mission churches. The main emphasis of the missions was on promoting European culture along with religious conversion. Some have argued that these missionaries believed that their work would "civilize" the indigenous people through instruction in reading and religious conversion along with instruction in vocational skills considered necessary in order to produce a semi-skilled work force (Katjavivi, 1988). This education was in truth inadequate both in terms of quality and quantity and it was only reserved for the blacks while the whites received a much more formal and comprehensive education. These mission schools also had limited resources and supervision of the few schools that did exist was largely in the hands of missionaries who had "limited knowledge and experience of educational matters" (Hartshorne, 1992:24). Hartshorne, however, does note that the climate in which many of these missions worked was far from positive as far as primary schooling was concerned and that the various governments showed little interest in this level of education. Additionally,

little, if any, financial assistance was provided by the government to these schools while at the same time the government funded education for the white population. This is clearly evident in the work by Malherbe (1925) which shows little if any interest in the education of the “Natives”. With the second volume published in 1977 there is more discussion concerning education for other ethnic groups (black, colored and Indian), but for the most part the focus is still on education for white South Africans. Furthermore, the following quote by Hartshorne (1992:24.25) serves to summarize the underlying ideology of education for the black majority:

These views ranged from the idea of ‘the noble savage’ whom western education could only corrupt; the ‘spoilt Native’ in whom schooling created habits of idleness and ideas ‘above his station’ which prevented him from being ‘a good worker’; to fears, particularly in the latter part of the nineteenth century, that ‘educating the Native’ would endanger the position of the new white working class on the mines of Kimberley and Witwatersrand. Even where more positive views of schooling were taken they were determined by the concerns of white economical and political interests rather than by the needs of black people and their children.

Thus in South Africa the education of the majority of the population has been designed in relation to the needs of the minority. “In South Africa the primary education of black South Africans has neither been done first, in the sense of it having a clear priority, nor has it been done properly in terms of delivery, access and relevance and quality” (Hartshorne, 1992:22).

2.2.1 Education and segregated schooling

A number of different explanations exist regarding the foundations of segregated schooling in South Africa. The more popular version puts the legal and moral responsibility for the separate and unequal educational structure on the apartheid system. However, as Cross and Chisholm (1990:43) argue “there are those who have been concerned to show that racist attitudes were not the exclusive preserve of Afrikaners, and that English speakers have been as culpable as Afrikaans speakers in propagating segregation in schooling”. As described in previous sections (cf 2.2.2) during the British colonial administration, which took control of the colony in 1806, a racist ideology was already present. This ideology was influential in paving the way for an even more comprehensive segregated system, than that which was already put into place by the British administration, a system involving all aspects of society, including education.

Despite changes in government which first brought a Nationalist-Labor Pact government to power, then saw a Nationalist victory in 1929 and finally a 1933 coalition between Hertzog’s Nationalists and Smut’s South African party which was decisively defeated by the nationalist Party in 1949 [*sic*], overall state policy in education towards black and white followed the pattern of racial segregation established in the first two decades of the twentieth century. A solid infrastructure of state schools and a bureaucracy for white children was built, while the refrain of “adapted education” provided the rationale for segregated schooling for blacks largely under a voluntary, mission control (Cross & Chisholm, 1990:50).

Until this point the government had left the education of black Africans entirely to the mission institutions. These institutions were constrained in their ability to provide sufficient education for the majority population mainly due to a lack of funds. Despite an increase in educational expenditures the gap was still considerable. In Table 2.1 the figures emphasize the difference in government spending for the various racial groups.

Table 2.1: Total government educational expenditure by race

	Estimated % of population 1910-1949	% of state expenditure 1910	% of state expenditure 1939	% of state expenditure 1949
Whites	21.0	97.9	85.7	74.0
Coloreds	8.4	0.4	6.1	9.0
Asians	2.5	0.5	1.2	2.0
Blacks	68.0	1.2	7.0	15.0

(Source: Malherbe, 1977:appendix 31:700 & appendix 38:733).

As Table 2.1 clearly shows at the time of the union in 1910 the government spent 97.9% of its education budget on educating the white population in comparison to only 1.2% for the education of black South Africans. This was in spite of the large difference in the percentage of the population of each ethnic group and although the percentage spent on education for blacks, coloureds and Asians increased from 1910 to 1949 the increase was still insufficient. As a result both the quality and quantity of education varied between the various racial groups.

The Nationalist government that took over in 1948 believed that the mission schools were transmitting dangerous, alien ideas to their African students and as a result were turning them into “black Englishmen”. Additionally the economy was expanding and the mainly white run economy required a more literate workforce, which the mission schools were unable to

produce given their constraints (Malherbe, 1977). Shortly after the National Party came into power it appointed a commission known as the Eiselen Commission to “go into the whole question of Bantu education”⁴¹ (Malherbe, 1977:545). *Bantu Education* was a term that came into use in the 1950s and it became associated with the education of the black population during apartheid. However, before this time the education of blacks was commonly referred to as *Native Education* (Malherbe, 1925). Additionally, anthropologists used the term Bantu to refer to Bantu-speaking people, but it was not used in the same sense that it was associated with from the 1950s, specifically linking it to a particular ideology. As a result the term Bantu has become an ideological term associated with apartheid. Interestingly, Malherbe’s (1925 volume I) publication makes no mention of the term Bantu Education; however, in his second volume published in 1977 he uses the term Bantu Education instead of Native Education, to refer to the education of black South Africans even before the 1950s. In a footnote Malherbe (1977:545 fn10) states the following, “When Dr. Verwoerd became Minister of Native Affairs the collective noun *Bantu* (the people) came into vogue in Nationalist and subsequently general parlance to describe the African population of South Africa, succeeding ‘Native’ which itself had succeeded ‘Kaffir’”. Furthermore, the result of the Eiselen commission produced a report that “proved to be a blueprint of Bantu education for the next few decades” (Malherbe, 1977:545). Malherbe argues that the new approach announced by the commission was already indicated in the “first term of reference of the commission” as he quotes Dr. H. F. Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs:

The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude and their needs under ever-changing social conditions are taken into consideration (Dr. H. F. Verwoerd cited in Malherbe, 1977:545).

Hence from 1948 the organization of schools was viewed as ‘part of a plan of social development’, which was essential to the overall policy of separate development of the

⁴¹ *Bantu Education* was a term that came into use in the 1950s and it became associated with the education of the black population during apartheid. However, before this time the education of blacks was commonly referred to as *Native Education* (Malherbe, 1925). Additionally, anthropologists used the term Bantu to refer to Bantu-speaking people, but it was not used in the same sense that it was associated with from the 1950s, specifically linking it to a particular ideology. As a result the term Bantu has become an ideological term associated with apartheid. Interestingly, Malherbe’s (1925 volume I) publication makes no mention of the term Bantu Education; however, in his second volume published in 1977 he uses the term Bantu Education instead of Native Education, to refer to the education of black South Africans even before the 1950s. In a footnote Malherbe (1977:545fn) states the following, “When Dr. Verwoerd became Minister of Native Affairs the collective noun *Bantu* (the people) came into vogue in Nationalist and subsequently general parlance to describe the African population of South Africa, succeeding ‘Native’ which itself had succeeded ‘Kaffir’”.

different racial groups. Ultimately, the Eiselen Report “paved the way for the abolition of missionary education” (Malherbe, 1977:545) and replaced it with an apartheid education specifically known as Bantu Education. Under the Bantu Education Act (1953) the government assumed control of public education for blacks under which education for this racial group was expanded and simultaneously firmly controlled; blacks now had to submit to an inferior system of education, preparing them for inferior status in South African society. There were also separate educational systems in place for coloureds and Indians (sometimes referred to as Asians), which came into effect at various stages during apartheid. However, I am limiting my discussion here to the specific education designed for the majority black population. Additionally, educational funding for the other racial groups was limited in comparison to the whites (cf table 2.1), but the vast disparities that existed in support of education for the different racial groups emphasized the low status of Africans (cf Malherbe, 1977 for the average expenditure per pupil and for further discussion of specific educational policies for the different racial groups). Under apartheid an elaborate system consisting of a total of 17 different departments of education were established (Hartshorne, 1992:131). Before continuing it might be mentioned that in looking through the literature I found conflicting references to the number of departments of education during this period ranging from 17-19, which serves to highlight the complexity of the system that existed. However, none of the sources, apart from Hartshorne (1992), give a detailed account of these different departments. Thus I have chosen to use the account by Hartshorne as the source of my information since he provides the names of the departments (these are not provided in the other literature) and given his long history of direct involvement inside the system.

For the whites there were four departments, one in each province (the Cape, Transval, Natal and the Orange Free State). For the coloureds there was one department known as the House of Representatives (HOR). For the Indians there was also only one department known as the House of Delegates (HOD). For the blacks an elaborate system was designed, under which the education for blacks in “white” South Africa was organized under the Department of Education and Training (DET) while education in each of the homelands was under separate homeland departments (there were ten homelands in total, therefore, within the homelands there were ten separate education departments). The overall aim of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was one of control and separate development and not that of improvement for the blacks or any development for the African languages. It also paved the way for the

development of 'homelands' (Bantustans) in which blacks were separated along ethnic lines from each other and from the whites.

While searching for information concerning Bantu Education I ran across a detailed document entitled "Bantu Education: Oppression or Opportunity?" (SABRA, 1955) produced by the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA). In this booklet Bantu Education was promoted as being in the best interest of the blacks justified by separate development and praised as a positive model of education. In searching further I found that the term 'apartheid' was coined in the late 1930s by the SABRA, which called for a policy of 'separate development' of the races. Clearly the ideology of the SABRA is reflected in the document in the attempt to portray Bantu Education as positive for the blacks. The document attempts to reduce the criticism of Bantu Education claiming that government spending on Bantu Education has increased since the Bantu Education Act (1953). However, Malherbe (1977:551) points out that government spending per pupil during Bantu Education in terms of real money (after adjusting for depreciation of money) declined for roughly 12 years after the transfer to Bantu affairs in 1954. The SABRA (1955) document also draws attention to the shortcomings of missionary education in an attempt to justify the ideals of Bantu Education. All things considered, it is important to note that although there were continuous struggles against apartheid and its doleful effects on education, there were also compromises that frequently inhibited that struggle. The pressures on educators to continue to work within an apartheid system they personally detested is well described by Hartshorne (1992:9-17) in his personal account of his own work as a civil servant within the Department of Bantu Education.

Furthermore Kallaway (1990:233) like many others (too numerous to mention here) is critical of Bantu Education stating "it is universally recognized as a unique and bizarre form of human domination". However, Kallaway also points out that despite the "eccentric feature of identifying working-class children by the colour of their skin" the intentions behind the expansion of educational provisions for the masses were in essence similar to the evolution of mass schooling in Britain, Europe, and the USA in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Although it is possible to agree with Kallaway's analysis it is still essential to look at the specifics of Bantu Education given its influence and indoctrinating character that is still apparent even today. Heugh (1999:302) notes five specific issues that were the focus of the Bantu Education Act of 1953:

- A primary school curriculum which would prepare students for their subservient role in society, in contrast to the more academic curriculum in “white”, “coloured” and “Indian” schools (cf Hartshorne, 1992:65-68);
- Mother tongue instruction to the end of the primary phase (8 years) for reasons which were designed to further separate development and prevent African language speaking students from developing ambitions outside their own communities (cf Hartshorne, 1995:309-310);
- The introduction of Afrikaans and English as subjects in primary school;
- A switch of medium of instruction in secondary school to both Afrikaans and English (in equal proportions);
- A secondary school curriculum similar to that in “white” schools, but available, in reality to the small proportion of students who had not already dropped out of the school system at some point during the primary phase.

Additionally, I agree with Heugh (1999:302) in her argument that “African language speaking parents and students resented “Bantu Education” and correctly interpreted the mother tongue policy in primary school as a mechanism to prevent access to power” and combined with the qualitative impoverishment of Bantu Education helped fuel this resentment even more. Similarly, the ideology of preventing speakers of African languages access to power is clearly reflected in the most widely quoted explanation of Bantu Education:

Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live...education should have its roots entirely in the Native areas and in the Native environment and Native community...The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour (Verwoerd, 1954:83).⁴²

Thus it becomes clear that education for the majority of South Africans (the black population) was created to meet the needs of the minority white population in terms of the country’s economy and not the needs or desires of black Africans. Condemned as ‘education for barbarism’ Beinart (1994:154) argues that it was seen as “a measure for retribalization which would produce cheap but not entirely illiterate labour force”. Furthermore, it has been argued that Bantu Education was extremely successful – “through its hidden curriculum as much as its overt content – in ensuring the commitment of black South Africans to capitalist society and ideology” (Kallaway, 1990:236). The qualitative impoverishments of Bantu Education are evident in Thompson’s general description of education during apartheid:

⁴² As previously noted this speech is found in a collection of speeches by Dr. Verwoerd. Although the speech was made by Dr. Verwoerd in 1953 the speech was not made public until June 7, 1954.

[Overall] the government spent ten times as much per capita on white students as on African students, and African classes were more than twice as large as white ones...teachers in African schools were far less qualified than the teachers in white schools; African teachers were paid less than whites even when they did have the same qualifications; and they had to teach African schoolchildren from textbooks and to prepare for examinations that expressed the government's racial views (Thompson, 1990:196-197).

Although Bantu Education was highly condemned by academics, teachers, parents, and pupils the strategy for opposing it became a debated issue. It has been argued that of "all the campaigns conducted by the ANC, the campaign against Bantu Education was the most poorly planned, the most confused, and, for Africans generally, the most frustrating" (Karis & Gerhart, 1977:30). Karis and Gerhart (1977:30) contend that for the most part Africans were united in their opposition to Bantu Education as "the stakes were seen to be of profound importance: the mental outlook of generations of children", but that they were divided over the appropriate action to be taken. It is reported that some ANC leaders did not condemn fellow Africans whose views for opposing Bantu education differed from that of the ANC (Karis & Gerhart, 1977). The ANC was urging pupils and parents to boycott schools to show their opposition to Bantu Education. At the same time it was felt that those who went as part of a delegation to secure the readmission of children to school would "come to realize that education for ignorance and for inferiority in Verwoerd's schools is worse than no education at all" (statement by Professor Joe Matthews cited in Karis & Gerhart, 1977:35). Likewise, teachers' reactions to Bantu Education were complicated:

Teachers themselves were caught between several competing demands. Although teacher's organizations...played a disproportionately large role in public life...Many of their members occupied tenuous middle-class positions. Dismissal from the profession was thus an option not lightly courted. The attitudes of individual teachers were...often a great deal more complex than the positions adopted by their organizations (Soudien, 2002: 214).

The responses of teachers (seen as individual members of a group) to Bantu Education are examined by Soudien (2002:214) in four categories:

- Response and resistance – encompasses responses that were explicitly hostile to apartheid education.
- Strategic resistance – when individuals chose to subvert the system from within.
- Compliance – involved teachers who consciously chose to conform to the changes without accepting them.

- Acceptance – involves teachers who actively embraced the changes introduced by the government.

Certainly, it can be argued that Bantu Education had a powerful affect not only on a generation of students, but their teachers as well. Furthermore, apartheid, combined with the policy of Bantu Education, initially attempted to build upon the foundations already laid in the context of the nineteenth-century. In short, education during apartheid and especially Bantu Education is summarized as follows:

...these new policies were in due course to be blended with the tradition of educational policy that had been crafted over the years since the Union. Modes of governance and administration changed dramatically, but much of the curriculum and management tradition that had been built up over the years remained. Dual medium schools for white children, part of the ideological settlement of Union, were replaced by separate (*apartheid*) schools for Afrikaans and English-speaking children. The schooling of the black majority had always been separated from white education, but now after the Eiselen Report (1951) and the Bantu Education Act (1953), it was removed from the governance of mission churches and brought under **direct state control**. There was a strong commitment to different kinds of curricula for different racial groups in the notorious speeches of Dr. Verwoerd...Although mother-tongue education came to dominate in the primary schools, English (and Afrikaans in some parts of the country) remained the language of instruction in high schools throughout the apartheid era. Even at the primary school level there was little in the way of specific adaptation of the curriculum for black schools. [Moreover] advanced vocational and technical education was denied to all but whites (Kallaway, 2002:2 emphasis added).

Although during the 1970s and 1980s there was increased access to schooling for black learners (quantitative expansion) no additional resources were provided (qualitative expansion) at a comparable rate. In addition to the crisis of resources the government's use of education as a form of social manipulation was intensified by the attempt to enforce the 50-50 English-Afrikaans language in education policy.⁴³ The enforcement of this policy, specifically the use of Afrikaans, led to the Soweto student revolt in 1976 (cf 6.2 for a detailed discussion of the events leading up to the Soweto revolt). This is also seen as the turning point in South Africa's educational history. As a result of this the government was forced to back down and "under pressure from many quarters – the Ministry gave in and agreed that one medium, to be decided upon by the school, could be used from Std 5 [Grade 7] upwards" (Hartshorne, 1992:203).

⁴³ The National Education Policy Act, 1967 describes this policy, which the government attempted to strictly enforce in the early 1970s (Act 39 of 1967 cited in Malherbe, 1977 appendix 6:697). In 1975 the government attempted to enforce the 50-50 policy and in particular the use of Afrikaans as a medium for 50% of the subject in secondary schools, which led to the student uprising in Soweto in 1976.

2.2.2 *From apartheid to transition*

In the years that followed on the Soweto protest of June 1976 there had been many appeals to government to set up a government Commission to investigate the state of education in South Africa. The last time this happened was thirty years previously with the Eiselen Commission of 1949-51...Until 1980, however, there were few signs that government had any intention of subjecting education to any kind of investigation that might question the basic assumptions on which it was founded. Calls for commissions of investigation were either rejected or ignored. The pressures on government continued and came from four main sectors of society: the private sector, teachers, parents and the black community in general in the wake of the events of 1976-80 (Hartshorne, 1992:149-50).

It was not until June 1980 that the government decided to appoint a Commission to conduct an investigation into the state of education in South Africa. It was then announced that the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) would oversee the establishment of this Commission. This was to be known as the De Lange Committee,⁴⁴ appropriately named after the Chairman Professor J. P. de Lange (Hartshorne, 1992). There were a number of different views of the Committee: “some saw it as an attempt to dress up apartheid education in new structures (or to use a different metaphor, as putting old wine into new bottles); some as a more sophisticated way of labour reproduction and ‘training for capital’; some as an opportunity to make the attempt to resolve at least some of the problems that had plagued education, and particularly that of black South Africans...others felt threatened by the direction it took” (Hartshorne, 1992;149).

A major point in the report of the De Lange Commission was the issue of equality and justice. In a conference organized by the 1820 Foundation held in Grahamstown 4-6 February 1982 to discuss the Report as well as Government’s initial reaction the issue of equality and justice were critically debated (Tunmer, 1982). In his analysis of the De Lange Commission report Andre Kraak (2002:75) argues that it was “couched in racial terminology even though the report claimed to be moving away from race discrimination in order to equalize educational opportunities for all”. The racial framework of the report was found in the “economic dualism” which distinguished between a modern and a traditional economic sector (Kraak, 2002). Thus the modern sector was described by capital-intensive methods of production

⁴⁴ This Committee consisted of a total of twenty-five members, fourteen were white Afrikaans-speaking, five were white English-speaking, three were black, two colored and two Indian. Originally, there were no women on the Committee and one was appointed only after it “was specifically pointed out to the HSRC” that women were not represented” (Hartshorne, 1992:152).

while the traditional sector was portrayed by rapid population growth and the under utilization of resources. One of the fundamental suggestions made in the report was that vocational education with a practical teaching paradigm was the best educational strategy to assist traditional communities in the transition towards modernity. Other issues in the report included consultation (i.e. freedom of choice) along with education management and educational structure. Hartshorne, as one of the members of the De Lange committee, recalls the view of a number of committee members that the response by the government was both inadequate and disappointing (Hartshorne, 1992).⁴⁵ As Hartshorne (1992:183) argues, “whatever the imperfections of the De Lange Report it proved to be too ‘radical’ a document for the government establishment. In general, white South Africa was not ready for it, while black South Africa found it anything but a radical document and regarded it as merely confirming what they had been saying for two generations”. Although the government’s response to the report was inadequate and disappointing, I argue that many analysts have overlooked the importance of this document in opening the way for a new phase of educational debate in South Africa. The realization was that genuine educational reform could not be achieved within apartheid structures.

At each step of the way what had been positive in the original report had been further diluted in order to make ‘the new wine’ more easily contained in ‘the old bottles’, which were beginning to show cracks (Hartshorne, 1992:183).

On a similar note, Kraak (2002:76-77) seems to be in agreement with my view in the importance of the report and even though “ironically, De Lange’s views on vocational education, although still steeped in highly racialized characterizations of black society, were central to the rise of a new and reforming logic of educational change in the 1980s which, by arguing for the dismantling of traditional cultures as a prerequisite for capitalist modernization acted...to trigger the slow demise of apartheid...”.

The period between 1980 and 1985 was marked by increased student protests, which were accompanied by efforts at coalition building with trade union movements, teachers and parents. According to Nkomo (1990) student groups worked with parent/teacher associations,

⁴⁵ Hartshorne along with Committee member Franklin Sonn drafted a statement, which was signed by nine other Committee members and published in the press in October 1981. This statement details the dissatisfaction felt by many in the Government’s response to the report. Also in the Proceedings of the National Education Conference (Turner, 1982) a number of issues, from Committee members and other academics, concerning the report, are discussed in detail.

in particular the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee, which developed into the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) of the United Democratic Front (UDF). The NECC was formed to discover possible solutions to the schools' crisis and to formulate the specifics of a democratic people's education. This People's Education was to "replace the inferior, segregated, prejudicial, divisive and undemocratic apartheid education" (Nkomo, 1990:299). Already in 1986 a strategy of turning the schools of apartheid into institutions of people's education was discussed with the ANC in Zimbabwe. This was seen as necessary as "communities were confronted with the possibility of losing an entire generation of blacks to illiteracy with more school boycotts and closures, precisely at a time when a more meaningful education is needed in anticipation of a post-apartheid South Africa" (Nkomo, 1990:299). Additionally, the NECC signaled a shift from reactive protests around education to the development of a counter-hegemonic education strategy intended to provide the basis for a post-apartheid South Africa.

The aims of People's Education outlined in the two NECC conferences in 1985 and 1986 are:

The broad *goals* of People's Education are the setting up of a 'free, compulsory, unitary, non-racial and democratic system of education' relevant to the establishment of a unitary, non-racial government 'for all sections of our people', and so organized that it allows students, parents, teachers, and workers 'to participate actively in the initiation and management of people's education in all its forms'. The *values* to be promoted in People's Education would be 'democracy, non-racialism, collective work and active participation'. The educational objectives, to be reached through stimulation of critical and creative thinking, analysis and working methods, are:

- The elimination of illiteracy, ignorance, capitalist norms of competition, individualism, stunted intellectual development and exploitation;
- To enable 'the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system' and to prepare them 'for participation in a non-racial democratic South Africa';
- To equip and train 'all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggles to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial, democratic South Africa' (Kallaway 1990:238; and cf Hartshorne, 1992:chapters 10-11).

Kallaway (1990) argues that the assumption made of People's Education presumes that power is to be placed in the hands of the people. However, such assumptions do not contribute to the debate on the nature of education beyond the need to replace the apartheid educational system. The belief is that:

If People's Education is to ensure that education is not only to put an end to the politics of racism in education, but is to be instrumental also in creating a more just society by eliminating injustices based on class,⁴⁶ this will entail moving beyond the common formula for mass education to an understanding of how reform in education is related to a fundamental redistribution of power, wealth and privilege in society. It will be necessary also to explore how power is to be effectively devolved to local levels, how 'people's knowledge' is to come to inform the curriculum, and how critical thinking can be advanced in the school context (Kallaway, 1990:239).

Therefore, it may be argued that while racial capitalism in South Africa gave rise to particular ideologies, schools being principal instruments that rationalize the positions of the dominant and subordinate groups, a People's Education needs to offer more than a mere opportunity for individual upward social mobility. The new education system must emphasize the transformative function of education with the aim of eliminating social inequality, poverty, ignorance, and unemployment. Thus education is seen as a carrier of particular messages, both explicitly and implicitly. For these reasons education is not neutral, and it is important to understand this as a basis for approaching the tasks at hand. In the South African context, like in many other post-colonial societies, education carries and imparts particular racial, gender and class messages. It is therefore important that these messages are identified so that the transforming education system will be able to offer a new understanding and new types of values. Ultimately, the new system must offer empowerment to those who have previously been disempowered.

In 1994 the administration of the old apartheid system was renovated. There were three important steps in the reform of the education system.

- The reform of the education departments
- Curriculum 2005 (announced in 1997)
- The announcement of the LiEP in 1997

The focus of this research is on the LiEP, but a brief discussion of the other two aspects will be given to provide some background and general information.

⁴⁶ One may note that no mention is being made here to inequities based on gender. Unequal schooling for black pupils under apartheid certainly had serious consequences for gender equity. Racial inequalities influenced gender relations and identities and interconnected with authoritarian school practices and African patriarchy.

The previous system consisted of 17 racially defined subsystems, which were restructured into nine non-racial education departments⁴⁷ under the supervision of a national department of education. One of the major challenges of restructuring the new system was “that of undoing over forty years of apartheid neglect, particularly in the African component of the system” (Gilmour & Soudien, 2001:3). Gilmour and Soudien (2001:3) point to a number of features both physical and educational that were a result of this neglect namely: “excessively large class sizes, poorly qualified teachers, shortages of infrastructure and classrooms, and much more problematically, teaching and learning environments impoverished through both a lack of official interest and pervasive anti-educational attitudes amongst teachers and learners”. Since 1994, in an attempt to reform the educational system the government has put both administrative and curriculum reforms into place. The achievement of a single ministry and department and the development of Curriculum 2005 have been important milestones in reforming the educational system. However, these reforms have not been without controversy. Before continuing I will give a brief description of Curriculum 2005. Curriculum 2005⁴⁸ is premised on three critical elements. First, it introduces eight new learning areas that claim to discard many of the ideological restrictions of the past. Values such as non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, social justice, and cultural tolerance are the key principles that must be included in all new curricula. The eight new learning areas are: Language, Literacy and Communication; Mathematical Literacy; Human and Social Sciences; Natural Sciences; Technology; Arts and Culture; Economics and Management Sciences; and Life Orientation (DoE, 1997b:14-15). Secondly, Curriculum 2005 is an outcomes-based approaches founded on the attainment of 12 critical cross-field outcomes as the key building blocks of all curricula and qualifications. Thirdly, the new integrated curriculum framework is premised on attaining both a solid formative general education and a more meaningful specialization relevant to the labor market. As the guiding philosophy of Curriculum 2005 it was, for its initiators, the pedagogical route out of apartheid education (Chisholm, 2003).

In its emphasis on results and success, on outcomes and their possibility of achievement by all at different paces and times rather than on a subject-bound, content-laden curriculum, it constituted the decisive break with all that was limiting and stultifying and in the content and pedagogy of education. OBE [outcomes-based

⁴⁷ These nine new departments are located in each of the nine provinces (Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal (often referred to as KZN), Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape, Northern Province, Western Cape respectively).

⁴⁸ Curriculum 2005 is not the focus of this study and thus I provide only a very brief description of this educational reform (cf Chisholm, 2003 for more details). The term Curriculum 2005 refers to when this new reform will be fully implemented throughout the primary and secondary school system.

education] and C2005 [Curriculum 2005] provided a broad framework for the development of an alternative to apartheid education that was open, non-prescriptive and reliant on teachers creating their own learning programmes and learning support materials (Chisholm, 2003:4).

Furthermore, Chisholm (2003:4-5) notes that “while there was overwhelming support for the principles of outcomes-based education and Curriculum 2005, which had generated a new focus on teaching and learning, implementation” it was confounded by:

- a skewed curriculum structure and design
- lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy
- inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers
- learning support materials that are variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms
- policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms
- shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005
- inadequate recognition of curriculum as the core business of education departments.

Further criticism of Curriculum 2005 is highlighted by Heugh (1999) who argues that in the same year as the LiEP was being announced a separate but parallel process was in place by the Department of Education, which would culminate in the development of a new curriculum. The fundamental nature of this was to guarantee equitable education for all and was to be outcomes based. Conversely, Apple (1996) argues that outcomes-based education (OBE) is simply a new term for an older version of educational control and stratification. Curriculum 2005, as the new curriculum is called, has eight learning areas as previously noted, one of which is “Communication, Literacy and Language Learning” (DoE, 1997b). Heugh (1999:308) is critical of the new curriculum given that during the drafting process:

...issues relating to language were curtailed to this area as if learning in the other seven areas were disconnected from language altogether. Unstated, however, was the premise that in the end all students in this country would somehow end up learning through the medium of English. Thus the issues of terminology development, textbook and materials production in all 11 official languages of the country, and bilingual/multilingual teacher training for the new curriculum were never discussed.

The lack of discussion concerning the issues mentioned by Heugh coupled with the fact that Curriculum 2005 was announced nearly 4 months before the LiEP – which was only finalized after the announcement of the new curriculum – suggests that the department has not given serious consideration to the central role that language plays in the learning process.

Furthermore, after the election of 1999 the Department appears to not have changed much in their thinking pertaining to the issue of language in education. With the appointment of a new Minister of Education a review of the major education changes was given priority, which began with a review of the new curriculum. An appeal was made by PRAESA⁴⁹ (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) to the Minister and Department of Education that the curriculum review and language policy review processes should be integrated and conducted simultaneously. This suggestion was, however, ignored and as Heugh (2002:175) argues “the logic of separate development proved irresistible”. Moreover she contends, “until...there is an acknowledgement of how and why it is that **language is a key** to the learning and teaching process, there will be no effective remedy” (Heugh, 2002:176).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) maintains that a positivist paradigm, to which some academics subscribe, allows them to believe that answers to problems can be found by examining only the evidence before them and not *why* that evidence has presented itself (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). For Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) the *why* questions are just as important and when we ask these questions they will most likely have to do with power relations and the widening gap between the haves and have-nots. For Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) the important issue is that we look beyond the positivist paradigm in asking our questions and in doing so approach our work from a critical perspective that attempts to highlight the ideologies at work (cf chapter 4 on the application of critical theory in this work).

Furthermore, Hartshorne (1992:333) asks some critical questions for the future of education in South Africa:

Perhaps the most important question, as the country moves towards a post-apartheid society, is whether a new education dispensation can respond to broad national social, economic and political goals without continuing to be politicized in the sense of being committed to and controlled by, a particular, party-political ideology not necessarily

⁴⁹ Dr. Neville Alexander – one of the leading language experts and language activists in South Africa, is the founder and director of the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) – mentioned the appeal made by PRAESA during my interview with him in 2002. Moreover, Neville Alexander is a member of the Western Cape language committee, the Chair of the LANGTAG Committee as well as the chair of the Advisory Panel on Language Policy to the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Alexander for taking the time to answer my questions and for providing additional information and clarification when needed. Furthermore, Alexander is very critical of OBE and Curriculum 2005.

supported by all members of the society served by the education system. Will South Africa learn from these lessons of the past? Or is the past so painful that it can be exorcized only by repeating it under a different ideological banner? This may have no problems for the politician in power, but for the educator, whose concern is for the well-being of all children and young people, and for the kind of learning environment in which they grow up, it is a matter of paramount importance.

The history of apartheid as described throughout this chapter is seen as a history of segregation, oppression, violence, inhumanity, but more so as one of resistance, opposition and struggle. What remains to be seen is if educational policy-makers can learn from the past in paving the way for a new future. I now turn my focus on the languages in South Africa.

Chapter 3. The Languages of South Africa

3.1 How many languages are there?

The South African linguistic scene is extraordinarily rich and diverse. There are twentieth-century cases of language shift,⁵⁰ language death, language murder (northern Transvaal Ndebele), language creation (planning), bilingualism, diglossia, language avoidance registers, koines, developed slang registers, language mixing⁵¹ alongside puristic movements, and more (Baily, 1995:40).

South Africa has been the meeting ground of languages belonging to several major families, the chief ones being Khoesan, Niger-Kordofanian and Indo-European (Mesthrie, 1995:vx). The quote above serves to highlight part of the complex and interesting nature of multilingualism in South Africa, which leads us to ask: How many languages are there? In an attempt to answer the question it is necessary to first define what we mean by language. Thus are we referring to a language family, the language itself or a dialect? The *Ethnologue*⁵² lists 31 languages for South Africa of which 25 are living languages, 3 are second languages without mother tongue speakers, and 3 are extinct (Grimes, 1992). However, there are those who criticize the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) for their fragmented approach,⁵³ which is both building and destroying languages simultaneously (Prah, 2003) as the work results in dialects being elevated to individual languages by different writing systems:

This fragmentation approach is still popular with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), a leading group in the work of rendering African languages into script, otherwise translating the Bible into African languages. The rendition of African languages into scripts for purposes of the development of Africa cannot at the same time proceed with the fragmentation of languages as is being conducted by the SIL. In effect, the SIL is building and destroying at the same time. When one asks why this is

⁵⁰ Language shift refers to a tendency to use a particular language other than the speaker's native tongue. Language loss is when a language loses territory in a particular community and speakers of that language become less proficient in its use. Language death is when the language in question is no longer spoken by anyone in the community.

⁵¹ In South Africa there are also a number of mixed Creoles (for example, Flaaitaal, Tsotsitaal and Isicamtho), which in some cases are the result of language contact in multilingual settings (cf various chapters in Mesthrie, 1995 for more information concerning these varieties).

⁵² The *Ethnologue* is currently the most comprehensive listing of the world's (mostly oral) languages. The 13th addition is a searchable online Web site, the address is: <http://www.sil.org/ethnologue>. The *Ethnologue* is a catalogue of more than 6,700 languages spoken in 228 countries. The *Ethnologue Name Index* lists over 39,000 language names, dialect names, and alternate names. The *Ethnologue* is edited by Barbara Grimes who is one of the leading people in the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), which has some critics (cf 4.3 for some of this discussion).

⁵³ For a discussion of harmonization of the languages to counteract this fragmentation cf 3.4.

the case, the reason that comes easily to the fore is that the object of such endeavours at rendering African languages into script is not in the first instance to help in the development of Africa, but rather simply to translate the Bible into African speech forms and to evangelise and convert Africans into Christians. Unless one assumes that converting Africans to Christianity represents development, all other considerations are for such purposes insignificant (Prah, 2003:26).

Furthermore, Welmers (1971a) maintains that SIL has been involved in training Bible translators in Africa since roughly World War II. Nonetheless, missionaries have not been alone in their influence on African languages and although “evidence of linguistic amateurism is still widespread among missionaries in Africa...the admitted evidence of naiveté, paternalism, and other offensive attitudes can be multiplied many times if one studies other groups in recent and contemporary Africa – colonial administrators, the business community, visiting academic personnel, and even research anthropologists!” (Welmers, 1971a:569 emphasis original).

While the Ethnologue lists 31 languages for South Africa, other researchers suggest that the actual number of linguistic varieties in South Africa is problematic (Mesthrie, 1995). For example, in the 1991 census the only language question posed was: “State which language each person most often speaks at home”, which Mesthrie (1995:xvi) suggests “is not very informative in a country where multilingualism is widespread, and many individuals are proficient in several languages”. Furthermore, the apartheid census only seriously considered bilingualism in English and Afrikaans, with the 1991 census figures excluding altogether the former TBVC states (Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei) (Mesthrie, 1995). Thus not only is the number of languages difficult to pin down, but also the number of speakers may be difficult to ascertain if relying on such misleading information. In an effort to provide a clear picture of the number of speakers I make use of the new 2001 census figures recently released along with those of the 1996 census, which show the following distribution of languages (cf table 3.1):

Table 3.1 Home languages in South Africa % of speakers

	1996	2001
Afrikaans	14	13.3
English	9	8.2
(isi)Ndebele	1	1.6
(isi)Xhosa	18	17.6
(isi)Zulu	23	23.8
Sepedi (Northern Sotho)	9	9.4
(se)Sotho (South Sotho)	8	7.9
(se)Tswana	8	8.2
(si)Swati	3	2.7
(tshi)Venda	2	2.3
(xi)Tsonga	4	4.4
Other	1	0.5

(Source: Population Census 1996, 2001 as reported in Census in Brief, 1998 and 2003).

As suggested by Mesthrie (1995) language statistics must constantly be modified and updated to account for movements in and out of the country, shifts in language preference and most of all, the very multilingual nature of countries like South Africa, which is reflected in the number of home language speakers in the 1996 and 2001 census figures (cf my diagram in appendix A). What is clear from the statistics above is that the majority of the population in both 1996 and 2001 were speakers of African languages. Yet, the census remains oriented towards monolingual thinking as multilingualism is still not considered. Certainly asking questions about other languages in addition to the home language would support the clause found in both the LiEP and the Constitution, which suggest the promotion of multilingualism. Furthermore, of particular interest to this investigation for the three major languages in the Western Cape⁵⁴ the 2001 census figures show that 55.3% of the population in the Western Cape speaks Afrikaans as their home language followed by 23.7% as Xhosa mother tongue speakers with 19.3% stating that English is their home language, which has implications for the educational system.

Another problem in attempting to ascertain how many languages there are in South Africa is that in much of the literature the names of the languages vary (cf 3.2 regarding the use of

⁵⁴ The 2001 census figures show that the Western Cape has the highest proportion of English mother tongue speakers followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 13.6% and Gauteng with 12.5%. Also the Western Cape has the second largest percentage of Xhosa mother tongue speakers with the Eastern Cape having 83.4%. Finally, the Northern Cape with 68% is the only province that has more Afrikaans mother tongue speakers than the Western Cape (Census in Brief, 2003).

prefixes). One reason for the variation is that authors have relied on different orthographical conventions (Maho, 1998). Thus Maho (1998) argues that the orthography changes and as a result different spellings of languages pertain to different time periods. This is particularly true with what he refers to as non-standardized languages such as Ju'hoan also known as Žu'hōasi, Zhu'oase, Zhu'oasi, and Ssu-Gnoassi, which are all used to denote the same language. In a volume of *Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa* the author of the appendix of African language and dialect names suggests that in deciding what is a language or dialect has often been virtually an arbitrary choice on the part of researchers (Welmers, 1971b). Welmers maintains that there are a number of different reasons for this and part of his argument suggests the following:

For a variety of reasons, it is simply impossible to prepare anything like a 'definitive' index of African language and dialect names. Even if there were no other problems, the inherent nature of language and dialect diversity makes precise definition impossible. If it is clear that mutual intelligibility between two groups of people is out of the question, it is easy to say that they speak different languages; at the other extreme, if two groups can understand each other with little difficulty, but recognize specific differences in each other's speech, it is easy to say that they speak different dialects of the same language. However, there are countless instances in which 'mutual intelligibility' is a border-line proposition; members of two groups may be able to communicate if they speak carefully, or after a few hours or days or weeks of experience. In such cases, even if the facts are known and defined, there is no accepted criterion for deciding how much difference justifies defining the speech of different groups as different languages rather than dialects of a single language.

In relatively few cases...are the facts about communication known or adequately defined. In some cases, reports that two groups of people speak 'different languages' are clearly based on a consciousness of antagonism between the groups, without the question of actual mutual intelligibility being raised at all (Welmers, 1971b:759-760).

Hence, Welmers (1971b:760) argues that, for example, "Zulu and Xhosa and Swazi are as much a single language as the English of London, New York, and Melbourne; yet they are traditionally labeled as distinct languages". Certainly this suggests that counting languages in Africa or other parts of the world is not a straightforward task.

Equally, Maho (1998) maintains another reason for the variation of names is that some writers have not used appropriate sources of information for names of peoples and their languages. In addition, he suggests that some scholars have even resorted to using names that have been ad hoc creations. However, Maho (1998) argues that in order to count the languages one may

start by counting the language families. Thus there are the three language families referred to by Mesthrie (1995) in the beginning of this chapter.

As we proceed down the genetic hierarchy with regard to languages then the question of how many becomes even more difficult to answer (Maho, 1998). However, if we look at it from a functional viewpoint then the number is eleven, corresponding to the number of official languages recognized in the Constitution (the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Xhosa, isiZulu - RSA, 1996). It is important to mention, however, that I do not subscribe to such a functionalist view of languages as it leaves out a number of languages that are found in South Africa. For example, the San languages, although many can be described as dying languages (languages with few mother tongue speakers), with only a few speakers remaining are still an important part of South African history and culture and they are acknowledged in the Constitution but not given official status. Additionally, this functionalist viewpoint leaves out a number of Indian languages, in particular, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Urdu and Telegu, etc., which have existed in large numbers mainly in the Kwa-Zulu-Natal province since 1860. Furthermore, although the policy is known as the eleven official language policy, South African sign language has been recognized as the twelfth official language. Plus there has been some criticism regarding the wording of the Constitution in particular using the incorrect term Khoi instead of the linguistically correct term Khoe and for singling out Nama, which is only one of the many Khoe languages (cf Baily, 1995; Mesthrie, 1995 or Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:375-376 fn 13 for more details with regards to the Constitution).

Unquestionably one of the major issues regarding languages in Africa is that the present borders were arbitrarily and artificially delineated by Europeans without any regard to the linguistic situation that existed. Thus the “scramble for Africa” through the partitioning of Africa between the colonizing European powers, led to the scrambled linguistic map that exists. As such, Africa in general and South Africa in this case display an overlapping of languages often referred to as *cross-border languages* – a situation in which many languages are spoken in more than one country often as a first language (Elugbe, 1998). Before dealing with the issue of cross-border languages I would first like to briefly present the sociolinguistic context that exists in South Africa. Upon entering South Africa one is struck by the number of different languages reflecting the multilingual reality that exists in the country. Moreover, this is represented by the complex language profile that exists in the country and includes

languages from the Khoe and San language groups, Bantu languages represented by Nguni and Sotho clusters and the more distantly related Tsonga and Venda. Recent immigrant languages include Chopi, Makhuwa and Kalanga (Mesthrie, 1995). The Indo-European family members include a number of languages of the Germanic and Indic branches with other language families including the Dravidian and Polynesian languages (cf Mesthrie, 1995:xv for complete details). The majority of South Africans speak at least one of the eleven official languages as a mother tongue and a large number speak either Afrikaans or English as an additional/second language. Despite the recognition of eleven official languages in the 1996 Constitution, English and Afrikaans remain the main languages used in government and formal institutions such as schools, from at least from Grade 4 onwards, and in the economic sector.

In looking at the official African languages found in South Africa two languages, in particular, can be classified as cross-border languages: (se)Tswana (or Setswana) (found in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa) and (si)Swati (found in South Africa and Swaziland). Although not often acknowledged, Tsonga could be considered a cross-border language as it includes a number of dialects in South Africa, southern Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe (Baily, 1995) and according to Molosiwa, Ratsoma and Tsonope (1998) (se) Sotho (South Sotho) and Sepedi (Northern Sotho) could be added to the list. Their argument suggests the following reason:

...the notion of the existence of a language by the name Setswana, separate from Sesotho and Sepedi, is a relatively recent development attributable to missionary work. This development dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century...the tripartite division into Setswana, Sesotho and Sepedi was not based on observed linguistic differences, but resulted largely...from the different orthographic conventions developed by three different mission stations, operating in three different geographical areas (Molosiwa *et al.*, 1998:100).

The argument by these researchers is in line with the argument I have presented earlier and serves to show that many of the African languages may in fact be dialects and not separate languages (cf 3.4 where a call for the harmonization of these languages is suggested). In a letter by Neville Alexander to the Editor of the Language Projects Review in July 1988 (Alexander, 1989:72-78 in appendix 2) the suggestion of harmonizing the Nguni and Sotho languages was apparently not seriously considered by the Editor. Furthermore, in his reply to Alexander the Editor, Sydney Zotwana, stated that the example cited by Alexander in the case

of Shona in Zimbabwe involved the harmonization of dialects of the Shona language (Alexander, 1989). Yet, Zotwana argues the opposite for the South African languages stating that “in the South African situation...one would be dealing with different languages rather than dialects”, suggesting that the Sotho languages: Sepedi (Northern Sotho), (se)Sotho (South Sotho) and (se)Tswana (Setswana), and the Nguni languages: Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, and Ndebele are in fact separate languages altogether (Alexander, 1989:76). The argument against Alexander’s suggestion of harmonization obviously does not take into consideration the way languages have historically been defined on the continent. Therefore, Zotwana seems to have overlooked the fact that many dialects have been elevated to the status of separate languages in an arbitrary fashion often by missionaries who have generally not taken the views of the speakers of these languages into account.

Furthermore, the sharing of linguistic resources in the future development of African languages that exist in more than one state (cross-border languages) may help to strengthen these languages.

Given the fact that countries in Southern Africa share a number of common languages it appears sensible to suggest that co-operative partnerships in language development are possible (Pandor, 1998).

Certainly this cooperative partnership could compensate for the cost of language development in which the cost could be shared between nations. Likewise, language standardization across borders would increase the size of the language, making it more important and viable. Finally, the cost of producing books and educational materials could be reduced “by having single editions jointly sponsored by the countries sharing the common language. This joint effort can...be extended to the training of teachers. [Undoubtedly] mother tongue education would thus receive a healthy boost” (Elugbe, 1998:27).

3.2 The Bantu languages of South Africa

In this dissertation I will restrict my discussion to the Bantu language family only as space constraints do not allow a detailed discussion of the other language families. My aim is to highlight the languages within this group, as they are the officially recognized African languages. However, for a detailed discussion of the various languages found within the

borders of South Africa see the entire volume of Mesthrie (1995). Furthermore, English and Afrikaans have been discussed in some detail in chapters 2 and 6.

According to Maho (1998) the term Bantu was introduced to refer to these similar languages in the mid-nineteenth century. This word derives from the plural form of a Xhosa word meaning 'people' known as *abantu* (Maho, 1998). Deviations of the same word for human being can be found in Bantu languages all over Africa; for example, in Kiswahili a person is *mtu* (plural *watu*). According to archaeological evidence the Bantu-speaking people were herding livestock and practicing cultivation in the Transvaal and Natal regions of South Africa already before 300 AD (Baily, 1995). The term *Bantu* as an overarching concept for the nine officially recognized African languages was invented by Bleek⁵⁵ (1857/1862), who described Xhosa as a member of the *Bâ-ntu* family of languages (Broeder, Extra, Maartens, 2002; Cole, 1971). Eventually, the term Bantu has come to denote the languages spoken largely in sub-equatorial Africa. The majority of the work on Bantu languages is based on typological classifications and genetic relationships (cf Bailey, 1995; Cole, 1971; Harries, 1995).

In South Africa there are four different language groups recognized as Bantu-speaking people: Sotho, Nguni, Tsonga and Venda. In addition, the Sotho and Nguni groups contain a number of languages and Baily (1995) argues that the separation between these two language groups is complete and not partial as there are no midway dialects between the two. Before continuing I would like to briefly discuss the use of the prefixes of the languages. Although, for example, (isi)Ndebele, (xi)Tsonga, (isi)Zulu, etc. are used in table 3.1 I do this to highlight the prefixes often used to refer to these languages. However, given that this dissertation is written in English then the English orthographic conventions are used in the general discussion of African languages. I quote Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:fn13 page375) in some length with reference to the prefix use:

⁵⁵ According to Cole (1971) Bleek's first publication of the term Bantu appeared in 1958, but it is known that he adopted the term at least a year earlier in a manuscript dated 1857, but not published until 1952. However, Broeder *et al.* (2002) suggest that the date for the first use of the term was in 1862 which is the publication date of the first of a two volume publication by Bleek entitled "A comparative grammar of Southern African languages" and this is recognized to be Bleek's major contribution to the field of African languages and it is often the most well known publication by him.

These prefixes are particular to each of the languages. Amongst others, Themba Msimang, former Head of the Department of African Languages at UNISA, South Africa's largest university, has pointed out that they are not transferable across languages. When, for instance, Zulu speakers speak Zulu about the language Venda, they cannot use the prefix 'Tshi' which Venda speakers themselves use when they speak about Tshivenda in their own language. Just like English speakers do not talk about 'Deutsch' (which is what German speakers say about themselves in German), it is not racist/linguicist to drop the prefixes when discussing the African language in English. Likewise, when a Xhosa speaker refers to the English language in Xhosa, she [*sic*] will use the term 'isiNgesi', without causing offense. However, Kathleen Heugh (the source of the information above) points out that because of the legacy of apartheid, some non-linguists have misinterpreted the dropping of the prefixes as racist. No linguists were involved in the negotiations when the terms were included in the Constitution with the prefixes.

Moreover, Zubeida Desai has also confirmed the acceptance of dropping of the prefixes (personal communication July 2003) stating a similar argument as presented by Skutnabb-Kangas.

The languages of the Nguni group are: Ndebele, Swazi, Xhosa and Zulu. The Sotho languages are Northern Sotho⁵⁶ (Pedi), Sotho (Southern Sotho) and Tswana. Tsonga is a "distinct language group comprising a number of dialects in South Africa, southern Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe" and "it is quite distinct from Shona, Nguni, Sotho, Venda, Copi and Tonga" (Bailey, 1995:45). Although Venda has some lexical similarities with Shona it is grammatically distinct and it has a range of sound that clearly distinguish it from Shona, Nguni, Tsonga and the central Sotho-Tswana groups (Bailey, 1995).

Upon entering South Africa one is struck by the multitude of languages in the country, with many of these languages existing along side one another and being mutually intelligible. However, with the arrival of Europeans on the continent "homogeneity replaced heterogeneity; unity and reason replaced chaos and confusion; and local particularisms were subsumed within a system of knowledge qualified as universal" (Harries, 1995:154). This was not in reality, but more so in their thinking and thus after the discovery of the "New World" the Europeans began to establish their hegemony in a new continent.

⁵⁶ Pedi has been renamed Northern Sotho, (Bailey, 1995). The standard written language of the Northern Sotho grouping was based on Pedi (a language related to the Sekhukhune people), which was most likely not acceptable to the other groups and thus the name change (Bailey, 1995). However, Pedi is the name used in the Constitution and often for statistical purposes.

3.3 The missionary influence

Whereas in Europe the victors imposed their national languages on vanquished linguistic minorities in the provinces, in Africa the isolated missionary was obliged to learn the local language. But transmitting an oral linguistic form to paper required a rearrangement and reordering of its signs and codes (Harries, 1995:154).

Thus the orthographies of the African languages were invented by the missionaries, which were to be used to read and write the Bible. As representatives of Enlightenment thought, the missionaries believed that their work was scientific and politically neutral. However, Harries (1995:154) in researching the Tsonga language argues, “the correspondence shows that their decisions on what constituted the Tsonga language were frequently based on criteria that were social and political, rather than scientific”. Furthermore, the missionaries exaggerated the differences in the various dialects.

Missionary linguistics created discrete zones by developing written languages centred upon a number of widely scattered bases...Differences were exaggerated, obscuring the actual gradualism and homogeneity of the real situation. And once these new forms had been codified, they then expanded out from these missionary centers by means of the mission out-school networks until dialect zones had been defined (Range, 1989:127).

By imposing their European world view and logic the grammatical structures of the basic categories were reinterpreted, which then led to a reinterpretation of identity among the African language speakers.

Flexible kinship groupings were interpreted as nations in the 19th century European understanding of the term – interpretations which increasingly affected self-understanding. Similarly, from being varieties within a series of linguistic continua, languages were standardised in orthography and grammar and became associated with national and later (as that concept became uncomfortable for imperial ambitions) with tribal identity (Peirce & Ridge, 1997:170).

Harries (1995) presents an example of this European world view regarding languages. According to Harries (1995) northwards of the north-eastern Transvaal in the Zoutpansberg the Cape Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) ministered to the various chiefdoms described as ‘Pedi’ while the Berlin Missionary Society were working with the Venda. Whereas, in the foothills south of the Zoutpansberg, the Swiss missionaries, eager to learn what the Cape missionaries referred to as Cafre, were working with a group of outsiders said to be speaking this language. This group was also believed to be conversant with Sesotho (Harries, 1995).

Thus it was believed that Sesotho could serve as a lingua franca and thus the Swiss mission would not have to spend time and money investing in linguistic work. However, when entering the interior, specifically Spelonken, in 1875 they realized that the immigrants there could not be slotted into the existing framework of linguistic studies (Harries, 1995).

They were a dauntingly confusing potpourri of refugees drawn from the length and breadth of coastal southeast Africa, who shared no common language and lived in scattered villages that were independent of one another. They had few important chiefs and no concept of themselves as a community. But despite their lack of any group cohesion, these newly arrived immigrants were defined by the indigenous peoples of the area as a group (Harries, 1995:156).

Harries (1995) argues that what needs to be considered is that the missionaries at the time were working with their preexisting codes of analysis and understanding, which they employed to make sense of these African societies, which for them were bewildering. Thus the African societies were being viewed through a filter of late-nineteenth-century evolutionist thinking. The result of this dilemma faced by the Swiss missionaries is highlighted as follows:

The point is that by the early 1880s Gwamba [the name eventually given to this group] was not just the term used to describe a hypothetical linguistic group. It had become the name of a people conceptualised in the European mind, because of their *perceived* linguistic affiliation, as a 'tribe' or 'nation'. By imposing their European world view and logic on the confusing array of peoples surrounding them, the missionaries had created linguistic and political categories that were derived more from their own epistemology than from any local social reality (Harries, 1995:163-164 emphasis added).

The missionaries saw reading and writing as important aspects of their evangelical mission and the production and control of grammars gave the missionaries enormous power over the African people. The monopoly held by the mission and later the government of i.e. Thonga (later known as Tsonga) books "crucially shaped and determined what Africans read" (Harries, 1995:165). This control and power over the lives of the Africans was then utilized by the apartheid government in their ideological plan as the differences between various language groups, originally initiated by the missionaries, was then further exaggerated in their effort to divide and rule the African people. Thus the division between i.e. Zulu and Xhosa became even more pronounced over time and as previously mentioned the development of different Sotho languages followed a comparable sequence. Similar situations can also be

found in other African countries where in Namibia, for example, the Owambos are grouped into fourteen kingdoms with each having its own language/dialect, though they are mutually intelligible. Not only can the Owambo groups understand one another but they are also able to understand the Rukwangali and Rugciriku and Otjiherero speakers as well (Brock-Utne, 1995; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001; Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b). Likewise, Brock-Utne (1995) notes that those who speak Sisubia, Sifwe and Setswana can understand the Silozi speakers. One reason for this is that orally these languages are very similar. However, in written form they differ greatly as a result of the work by different missionary groups and colonial powers (Brock-Utne, 2000a; Legère, 1998; Maho, 1998). For example, the Finnish missionaries have for the most part developed the Oshindonga language. On the other hand the Germans were mainly responsible for the development of the Oshikwanyama language along with producing some dictionaries, for instance an Oshikwanyama-German dictionary by Tönjes in 1910 and an English- Oshikwanyama dictionary by Tobias and Turvey in 1954 (Maho, 1998).

Harries (1995) argues that much of the pseudo-history surrounding the African languages was, therefore, drawn from the missionaries European based knowledge. He argues:

Social Darwinism told the missionary pioneers that the African societies around them were at an early stage of human evolution, roughly equal, in terms of development, to the *gentes* or clans of pre-feudal Europe. It was thus self-evident and in the natural order of things that African societies exhibited, however hidden, the same structure as their early European counterparts...

[Thus] the missionary linguistics saw [for example] Thonga as 'the standard or original language'. This practice, common in much of South Africa at the time, was built on the frequent use of the terms 'standardisation' and 'purification' to explain what was in effect the elevation of one language form to a pre-eminent status. For the early linguists were the creators of the standards or givens which produced simultaneously not only a language but also subordinate dialects (Harries, 1995:162 & 166).

3.4 A call for harmonization

In her 1995 report Birgit Brock-Utne mentions a conversation that took place after a lecture she gave on the language policy in Tanzania during a conference called “Decolonizing the mind” held at UNISA in Pretoria in South Africa. Here she states that:

A white South African woman in the audience said in the question period after my talk that strengthening Kiswahili in Tanzania should not be such a problem (yet it is, see Brock-Utne, 1993 with further references). ‘But here the question of finding an indigenous African language to strengthen is hopeless because of the multitude of languages. We have eleven indigenous languages. Should we choose one of them, there would be a domestic war’. A black South African man in the audience answered her: ‘That is exactly what the apartheid regime has wanted you to believe. They have used our languages to divide us’ (Brock-Utne, 1995: 7).

Likewise, Maho (1998) argues that this idea of a domestic war, an argument commonly used throughout Africa against the use of the vernaculars as official languages, has never been proven. In her report Birgit Brock-Utne mentions that this man was arguing for Nguni and Sotho to be standardized as two written languages. Alexander (1989), drawing on the work by Jacob Nhlapo in the late 1940s, proposes the standardization of the Nguni and Sotho languages respectively. Alexander (1989) argues that despite the differences between the missionary societies they all had a common goal of scattering the seeds of civilization and British interest. Alexander also draws on the work by Harries (1988) (partially discussed above in Harries, 1995) on the invention of the tradition of Ronga and Gwamba by Swiss missionaries. Essentially what Alexander (1989) is advocating is a long-term process of standardization of both spoken and written varieties of these languages, which would give recognition to the convergent development arising out of contact between varieties within these language clusters as well as from contact with English and Afrikaans. Whereas the role of the language boards during apartheid was to further divide the African languages the new language committees and language bodies established by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) whose role is to assist the development of the official languages (PANSALB, 2000a) could cooperate in areas such as terminology development which may provide greater unity among the written forms of each language cluster. Moreover, Pandor (1998) argues that PANSALB could be helpful in the development of cross-border languages by establishing a network of language organizations across the region.

On a similar note, as Alexander, Prah (2003) argues that for countries such as Tanzania, Swaziland, Lesotho, Somalia and the Central African Republic where overwhelming majorities speak one indigenous language the argument for education in the mother tongue is very clear. Furthermore, Prah (2003:25) makes the following suggestion:

...the harmonisation of the languages of the Great Lakes area, Runyakitara (Runyoro, Rutooro, Runyankore, Rukiga, Kiruwanda, Kiyamulenge) touches on speakers in north-western Tanzania, and covers a speech community including speakers from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. Obviously native speakers of this language would prefer the possibility of also working in their language. The harmonisation of the Luo varieties between north Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia should culturally empower millions of people. The Ngoni of southern Tanzania speak a language, which is spoken in seven countries (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania), in various dialects in the southern part of the continent. There is wisdom in providing the possibility for the speakers who may well total 40 million to use their mother tongue as a harmonised written form.

In this way Prah (2003) argues for a similar harmonization as Alexander (1989), yet on a larger scale, which may ultimately empower the users of these language varieties, while simultaneously ridding the continent of their dependence on ex-colonial languages. Before concluding this chapter, I would like to quote from Prah (2003:26) who argues:

All education is best achieved in the home language. However, what needs to be done to make this option economically viable? Make the switch profitable for both the individual and society?...One inadvertent result of missionary linguistic practices in Africa is that dialects have been elevated to languages to the point that the myth of Babel in Africa appears real, when in fact it is only ephemeral.

...The identification of language communities in Africa has been approached in a way, which favours the recognition of practically all dialect, and phonological variations as separated languages. This is partly because such observers have never in most instances, looked at African societies outside the framework of colonial boundaries or the immediate areas of missionary settlement and evangelical zeal. By this approach Cockney, Tyneside, broad Yorkshire, etc. in Britain will be languages in themselves.

It is, therefore, argued that perhaps now is the time to re-examine the current situation and in some way remedy the mistakes of the past and perhaps, harmonizing many of the African languages, as suggested by Alexander and Prah, is a start. On the African continent in 1996 a number of initiatives were undertaken highlighting the benefits of using African languages for education and development. These initiatives underlined the need for African governments to design policies and strategies geared towards the utilization of indigenous languages, as

languages of instruction in schools and in non-formal education. The Meeting of African Ministers of Education held in Accra, in August 1996, endorsed this strategy and recommended the use of African languages in the process of learning (Chimhundu, 1997). Participants of the meeting urged African governments to formulate requisite policies and strategies for their realization and among these were suggestions towards the standardization of orthographies of common languages, so as to ensure easier access to educational and especially reading materials. As such, the call for the standardization of languages in addition to “the harmonization of African languages which show high levels of mutual intelligibility would greatly facilitate the economies of scale in the development of educational, media and cultural materials which would go a long way in strengthening the basis of society for the cultural and social development of Africa” (Prah, 2003:2). Finally, since African languages cut across political boundaries there should be increased joint action among governments to develop policies regarding the development and use of these cross-border languages as these languages have the potential of serving as a model for empowerment, because they have a large population to back them and materials prepared in one country can be circulated and used in another. Consequently, to extend their use to a wider range of domains should not be problematic once the necessary language development work has been done (cf the volume by Legerè, 1998 for a discussion of cross-border languages and the possibilities).

Chapter 4. Theoretical Framework and the Research Field

4.1 Introduction

Fundamental areas of social life are becoming increasingly centered on areas where language plays a significant role, such as the media (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). It has been argued that:

Politicians now have unprecedented access on a regular basis to huge audiences, providing both better opportunities for them to shape opinion and win support, and greater risks of public exposure and discredit. The calculated design of political language is one crucial factor in success in political struggle...the increased importance of language in social life has led to a greater level of conscious intervention to control and shape language practices in accordance with economic, political and institutional objectives. This has been referred to as the 'technologization of discourse'⁵⁷, a distinctive characteristic of the contemporary linguistic and discursive order. Technologization of discourse involves systematic, institutionalized integration of: research on language; design and redesign of language practices; and training of institutional personnel in these practices (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:259-260).

This technologization of discourse is argued as being the 'top-down' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), institutional side of modern reflexivity, while the 'bottom-up' side pertains to everyday practices of ordinary people. It is this combination of research on the top-down discourse of the LiEP in its sociopolitical context with the bottom-up practices as observed through the use of ethnographic methods that this study is attempting to combine. As a result the underlying theoretical perspective in this study is supported by a critical perspective⁵⁸ combined with theories on bilingualism, language acquisition, foreign language learning and bilingual education, among others, which will assist me in this endeavor.

Theory is defined as "a way of interpreting, criticizing, and unifying established generalizations....Theory is [also] pliant, in that it allows its generalizations or 'laws' to be modified to fit data unforeseen in their formulations, and heuristic, in that theory itself provides a way of finding new and more powerful generalizations" (McLaughlin, 1991:6).

⁵⁷ Fairclough (1992) originally coined the use of this term.

⁵⁸ Although I discuss theories related to language acquisition/learning, bilingualism etc. this study is influenced by a critical perspective and a critical interest in language in contemporary society.

McLaughlin maintains that theories have three main functions namely *understanding*, *transformation*, and *prediction*. Accordingly:

Theories help us understand and organize the data of experience. They permit us to summarize relatively large amounts of information via a relatively short list of propositions. In this sense, theories bring meaning to what is otherwise chaotic and inscrutable.

New theories change the relationship between laws and facts. They enable us to use the empirical data to draw conclusions that are not evident from the data taken in isolation. In this sense, theories transform the meaning of what is known. They go beyond the information given and change both the content and form of our knowledge.

Good theories stimulate research. They are the ground from which hypotheses spring: theories generate new hypothetical laws to be put to empirical test. These hypotheses embody predictions about where theory is leading. They are not a guess at an answer to a riddle, but an idea about the next step that is worth taking (McLaughlin, 1991:7).

In line with McLaughlin's thinking, the theories presented in this chapter are then used to assist me in organizing and understanding the data collected. They are also used to transform this information and to assist me in drawing some conclusions as a result of my own analysis. Finally these theories are utilized to assist me in pointing out a new direction in the field of applied linguistics and educational research and in particular that of learning an additional language in the African context.

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical foundations that will provide the basis for understanding and analyzing the data gathered in this research. The chapter also specifies how the concepts of *foreign language learning*, *second language acquisition*, and *bi-/multilingualism* are understood in the context of this study. Additionally, I present models of bilingual education as described by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and discuss how these models and the programs within them may influence multilingualism. I will also provide a general discussion of the context of this study and how education and the language issue in Africa are linked followed by a discussion about *literacy*. Subsequently I address the concepts of *bilingualism*, *language acquisition* and *foreign language learning* and highlight the various ways in which they have been studied and understood.

Initially I begin with a discussion of the foundations of *critical theory*, which will serve as the basis of this investigation. I also discuss how it relates to *critical discourse analysis (CDA)*, which is used as an analytical tool in the investigation of the LiEP and the ideology behind it.

4.2 Critical approaches

The origins of critical theory date back to 1923 when the Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research) was established in Frankfurt, Germany. The institute now generally referred to as the *Frankfurt School* was originally guided by the principles of Marxism. It should be stressed that critical theory does not form a unity. That is, it does not mean the same thing to all its adherents. It can be divided roughly into two branches – the first centered around the Institute for Social Research, established in Frankfurt in 1923, and the second around the more recent work of Jürgen Habermas. The Institute’s key figures were Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Pollock, Fromm, Nuemann, Kircheimer, Lowenthal, Grossman, and Gurland. Although the membership is often referred to as the Frankfurt school, the label may be misleading given that the work of the members did not always form a series of complementary projects (Held, 1980). Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Lowenthal, and Pollock are generally the members included when referring to the ‘Frankfurt school’. However, there are those who include Habermas as the contemporary member. Thus many see the main figures of critical theory as Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas (cf Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Wodak, 1989; van Dijk, 1993, 1998; Held, 1980; Giroux, 1983). Although critical theory was an attempt to question the dogmatism of Marxist ideology it also aimed at revitalizing the weakening academic community by restoring critical discourse that dealt with all spheres of human social life (Habermas, 1974, 1987).

Critical social theory takes as topics of investigation the reflexivity of social research, the division of labor – including scientific and scholarly labor – in which it is carried on, and its social functions; that is, it studies “what theory means in human life” (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994:15).

Hence, sociocultural knowledge is seen as reflexive knowledge. Critical social theory takes the reflexivity of social inquiry explicitly into account. In doing so it challenges traditional dichotomies between genesis and justification, justification and application, fact and value, to name a few. These dichotomies were used to demarcate the “neutral” field of social research. “Critical theory is primarily concerned with the historical and social genesis of the facts it

examines and with the social contexts in which its results will have their affects” (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994:16). The major aim of critical theory is to effect social change by becoming part of the self-consciousness of oppressed social groups.

Hence, critical theory can be characterized first by what it is against or, in this case, critical of rather than what it supports. Although originally seen as a way of challenging the scientific community, critical theory is also seen as a way of challenging the power relations⁵⁹ within society.

Originally a calculated attack on philosophical and scientific positivism, critical theory has now become a questioning of, and qualitative approach to, the study of communication in a world dominated by quantitative methodologies and the social perspectives of an advanced industrial society...(Lanigan, 1981:142).

It is argued that critical theorists “sided with the Idealist view of the individual as an active, autonomous knowing-subject – in opposition to the individual as passive puppets, portrayed by deterministic forms of Marxism and positivist social science” (Pleasants, 1999:152). Critical theory, furthermore, argues that people are already knowledgeable, rational, critical, and reflexive agents who produce and reproduce social conditions in which they live. The aim of critical social theory is to show that people are producers and reproducers of their social condition and that false and distorting theories prevent them from having an adequate self-conception of their true situation. This ‘false consciousness’ can be overcome with the aid of a critical social theory, which corrects the theoretical misinterpretations and represents the essential features of individual subjectivity and social reality as it really is (Pleasants, 1999). Thus the objective of critical theory is not just to persuade academic professionals to question the taken-for-granted social system, but rather to persuade ‘the masses,’ which is the difficult job. Furthermore, critical theory also insists on critical self-examination and reflection on these taken-for-granted social conditions. According to Habermas (1974) a critical science has to be *self-reflective*, it must reflect the interests on which it is based and it must take into account the historical contexts of interactions.

⁵⁹ In chapter 1 section 1.3 the policy questions concerning the social relationships of power are posed.

4.2.1 Critical linguistics

The dominant view of language during most of the twentieth century was strongly shaped by Saussurean linguistics. This was known as a structuralist view of linguistics. For (Saussure, 1966) individuals *make use* of the structures and elements that are there, but they do not *change* them. The arrangements and elements are pre-given by society. This question of agency is one of the critical issues in the turn to a social view of language as opposed to a purely structuralist view. In this view language was conceptualized as a decontextualized abstract system of signs, where the meaning of any element in the system is derived from its opposition to other elements.

In reaction to the imprint left by American behaviorism and Popper's positivism a periodically intense discussion has arisen concerning the subject and fundamental methodological problem in the social sciences. In reaction to this, Habermas (1974, 1987) criticized the dangers of a purely positivistic science and its inclination towards ruling ideologies. Menz (1989:228) argues "a science which limits itself to the description and "objective" representation of facts neglects an important aspect, namely the aspect that science is practiced by *scientists*...by people with opinions, concepts, interests and ideologies⁶⁰ of their own". Moreover, critical theory is strongly aware of the "inevitable" connections between scientific knowledge and power. The basic assumptions are in line with Foucault's work on discourse (cf 1.5.5 for a general discussion of discourse as a concept), according to which the relation between power and knowledge is built in such a way that all scholars and scientific knowledge are already controlled by power (Foucault, 1980). A scientific theoretical framework is presented by Habermas (1974, 1987) that allows one to carry out critical social science along with critical linguistics. In this framework critical science must above all be *self-reflective*. For Habermas (1974) *self-reflection* means an attitude, which scholars must possess in order to consider the social importance of their actions. The social and linguistic scholars are also seen as part of the system, which they analyze and thus they must be conscious of the fact that scientific research is not "value free" and that it does not take place in a vacuum, but that it is *shaped by interests* along with the interests of the scholars themselves. Thus, for the researcher the act of knowing coincides with the act which achieves the goal of the interest, namely emancipation from the forces that

⁶⁰ cf 6.3.1 where it is suggested that some researchers may be influenced by their own ideas and beliefs.

have exerted unacknowledged influence over the researcher. For Habermas (1987) it is only through the act of self-reflection that we can become aware of the connection between knowledge and interest.

Interest is attached to actions that both establish the conditions of possible knowledge and depend on cognitive processes, although in different configurations according to the form of action. We have made this interlocking of knowledge and interest clear through examining the category of “actions” that coincide with the “activity” of reflection, namely that of emancipatory actions. The act of self-reflection that “changes a life” is a movement of emancipation (Habermas, 1987:212).

Critical linguistics emerged from the writing of *Language and Control* in connection with Hallidayan studies of the use of language in organizations (Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Halliday, 1970; 1973; 1976). The emergence of a critical perspective within linguistics was concerned with theorizing language as a social practice, an intervention in the social and economic order, and one in which it works by reproduction of (socially originating) ideology (Fowler & Kress, 1979). In this way it was seen as a contribution to a general understanding of language.

For Kress the critical question was, “What is it that gives rise to difference in language use?...the answer was ‘power’. Power is at play in all linguistic (inter)action, and much of the work of critical linguistics focused on the working of power in linguistic practices” (Kress, 2001:35 see also the volume edited by Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979). Kress (2001) argues that in order to focus on power, as the motor for linguistic production there was a need to “invert the relation between the linguistic and the social, and to make the social prior”. Kress argues that for Halliday, however, the social was responsible for the shape of the system and that language is as it is because of its social functions and not as a result of them (Halliday, 1970; 1973; 1976). Yet in critical linguistics “the social is seen as a field of power, and the linguistic action of socially formed and positioned individuals is seen as shaped first and foremost by differences in power” (Kress, 2001:35).

4.2.2 *Critical discourse analysis*

The theoretical foundation that critical discourse analysis (CDA) is based on is, among others, a humanistic interpretation of Marxist theories where issues of power are looked at in a critical light and where linguistic choices reflect power relations (Althusser, 1971). CDA applies to language types of critical analysis which have developed within ‘Western Marxism’ (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). It has been argued that Western Marxism:

...has given considerably more emphasis than other forms of Marxism to cultural dimensions of societies, emphasizing that capitalist social relations are established and maintained (reproduced) in large part in culture (and hence ideology), not just (or mainly) in the economic ‘base’. Western Marxism includes key figures and movements in twentieth century social and political thought – Antonio Gramsci, the Frankfurt School (including Jürgen Habermas), [and] Louis Althusser. Critical discourse analysts do not always explicitly place themselves within this legacy, but it frames their work nevertheless (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:260).

Although CDA is seen as having a similar theoretical background that is the basic assumptions and overall goals, its methodology⁶¹ differs according to particular approaches (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter, 2000). Titscher et al. (2000) have furthermore emphasized the thinking of Fairclough and Wodak (1997) with the assertion that although not explicitly stated the theoretical framework of CDA is derived from Louis Althusser’s theories of ideology, Mikhail Bakhtin’s genre theory, and the philosophical traditions of Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School (Althusser, 1971; Bakhtin, 1968, 1986; Gramsci, 1980). CDA thinkers also believe that Michael Foucault is important as well as Norman Fairclough. Fairclough’s CDA has been heavily influenced by Halliday’s systematic functional linguistics (Fairclough, 1992; for example Halliday, 1973). Alternatively, Wodak and van Dijk are influenced more by cognitive models of text planning (Titscher et al., 2000). It is in this sense the theoretical origins discussed have equally influenced my own work.

Furthermore, critical discourse (CD) analysts argue that their work should be judged by its ethical and political importance and that it should be evaluated by their success in attaining socio-political goals such as combating racism (van Dijk, 1998). Here van Dijk’s analysis, for example, is less interested in how groups are constituted and emerged historically, as Foucault

⁶¹ In this section I will present the basic as well as the specific theoretical background to the CDA approach I employ. However the discussion of the analytical framework used will be presented in the methodology chapter (chapter 5).

was focused on, but begins with groups or elites already in place and asks about their discursive strategies for maintaining power. It is argued by van Dijk (2001:302) that “social power is based on privileged access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge”. In the context of this investigation the dominant language, in this case English, may also be added to this list of socially valued resources. Furthermore, van Dijk (2001:302 emphasis original) argues:

Power involves *control*, namely by (members of) one group over (those of) other groups. Such control may pertain to *action* and *cognition*: that is, a powerful group may limit the freedom of action of others, but also influence their minds. Besides the elementary recourse to force to directly control action...‘modern’ and often more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one’s own interests*. It is at this crucial point where *discourse* and critical discourse analysis come in: managing the minds of others is essentially a function of text and talk.

Other CD analysts echo van Dijk’s argument that a critical analysis should “not remain descriptive and neutral: the interests guiding such an analysis are aimed at uncovering injustice, inequality, taking sides with the powerless and suppressed” (Wodak, 1989:xiv; also cf Habermas, 1987). Additionally it is argued that this view does not equal an unscientific approach to research, but based on the ideas of Adorno it suggests that no research is completely objective and that our interests, values and decisions, always guide us which in turn influence our analysis (cf Adorno et al., 1950; Habermas, 1974, 1987; Wodak, 1989). Thus critical scholars make their social and political position explicit, they take sides and actively participate in order to uncover and demystify or challenge dominance in their analyses (van Dijk, 1997). The focus is not solely an academic one, but rather directed at societal and political issues, the fundamental problems in society. These problems are generally experienced by groups of people who have less power, fewer resources and in particular less access to the discourse of, for example, the media or academia than the elites who may either ignore these problems, they may redefine them or in some instances even explain them away (van Dijk, 1990).

Inequality and power differences are fundamentally linked to access to various genres, modes, types or styles of text and talk. More access to more public media, and more control of the contents of its discourse are highly reliable indicators of symbolic resources or ‘capital’ that signal power relations in contemporary society.

Thus, power abuse and inequality may be expressed, signaled or legitimated in many ways, through rhetoric and persuasive augmentation as well as through control of semantic content. Indeed, 'modern' power abuse, and its ensuing forms of inequality, have a vital discursive basis of reproduction...The manufacture of consent that sustains such power differentials may be one of the most effective ways to control resistance and to suppress the formation of counter-ideologies and counter-power (van Dijk, 1990:11).

The relationship between ideology and society is explained in terms of *hegemony* (Gramsci, 1980), which conceptualizes the idea that instead of the imposition of dominant ideologies by a ruling class hegemony works more subtly. Apple (1996:14) views the concept of hegemony as an important "tool in uncovering some of the ways in which differential power is circulated and used in education and the larger society". Furthermore, he defines the term as "a process in which dominant groups in society come together to form a bloc and sustain leadership over subordinate groups" (Apple, 1996:14). The important element in relation to this power bloc is that it relies on consent as opposed to coercion⁶² to the prevailing order. Furthermore, the "minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance, and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will" (van Dijk, 2001:302) their ideologies may turn into beliefs that are taken for granted or simply become common sense. In this case van Dijk (1998:102) argues "ideological dominance and hegemony is 'perfect' when dominated groups are unable to distinguish between their own interests and attitudes and those of dominant groups. [Furthermore] they may not even be able to see conflicting ideologies...as viable acceptable alternatives". It is also suggested that although hegemonic relationships should be thought of in class terms it is also essential that they be recognized in other relations of power such as race, gender, sexuality, and "ability" (Apple, 1996).

Van Dijk (2001) proposes that it is important to know exactly *how* powerful speakers or groups 'exhibit' their power in discourse and which discursive strategies and structures are involved in the process. He also argues that in the analysis of discursive reproduction CDA has two major dimensions, namely production and reception. Thus not only the enactment or expression of dominance should be focused upon, but also the consequences or results of such structures for the (social) minds of recipients (van Dijk, 2001). Additionally, an important dimension of this dominance is the patterns to *access* to discourse (van Dijk, 1996). The framework for this will be presented in the methodology chapter.

⁶² This is also similar to the thinking of Freire (1970) with regard to the oppressor-oppressed relationship.

By applying CDA, namely based on the method used by Teun van Dijk (1990, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001), but also influenced by Norman Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) and Ruth Wodak (1989) an attempt is made to expose and study societal problems stemming from manipulative and discriminatory language use by powerful groups, which is seen as an important way of doing sociolinguistics. The thrust of CDA is then essentially the issue of language and power. As a result I will focus my analysis on “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 2001:300; cf chapter 1.3 for specific questions related to this point). In particular I focus on the discourse in the LiEP in an attempt to highlight the power relations at work. Consequently, I not only focus on the production of the various structures of text and talk, but also attempt to ascertain the consequences of these structures for the recipients (cf chapters 6 and 7 for this discussion). Although the main focus of this research is on the actual classroom practice, the policy is also viewed as an important aspect in this investigation and it needs to be analyzed. To facilitate this I incorporate the CDA method influenced mainly by the work of van Dijk in my policy analysis. However, through my extensive reading of CDA I have also been influenced by the work of Fairclough and Wodak (cf chapter 5 for a more detailed account of the methodology used). Furthermore, it is understood that my analysis is far from exhaustive, as this in itself would entail an entire new dissertation, not only in the policy but also more in the practice. In this study critical discourse analysis is applied to critically analyze the LiEP in order to draw attention to some of the ideologies found in the policy along with issues relating to access and as a result highlight some of the inequalities that may exist.

4.3 Education and language in Africa

When we think about Africa and the issue of language generally the first thing that comes to mind is the enormous number of languages on the continent. According to the Ethnologue database (13th edition, Internet version) there are roughly 6,700 languages worldwide of these 2,011 languages are located in Africa (Grimes, 1992). Currently SIL is the leading group when it comes to putting African languages into writing (this is the same thing the missionaries did during the colonial period) and it is argued that this is both building and destroying languages simultaneously (Prah, 2003) (cf 3.3 and 3.4). An example of such work has been discussed in reference to the two main languages in Namibia, Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama (Brock-Utne, 1995; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2001; Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b; and cf 3.3) and the Sotho languages (Molosiwa *et al.*, 1998). Also it must have suited

the divide-and-rule policy of apartheid to keep the dialects as separate written languages. Despite the criticism, the figures provided in the *Ethnologue* suggest that 30% of the world's languages are located on the continent. Some authors have suggested in light of such information that:

The figures are at first sight baffling, and in the past they have given rise to a widespread perception of Africa as characterized by a highly problematic degree of multilingualism...Africa's Tower of Babel was perceived as a paralyzing factor in development, a threat to national unity, an unworkable burden for the Africans. Yet, much of this may lie in the eye of the beholder (Blommaert, 1999:section 2).

Fardon and Furniss (1994:16) state that:

Part of the problem lies in envisaging the relation of hegemony to exist between languages rather than between social agents who are empowered or disempowered under specific conditions of language. 'Language' is objectified in the politics of discourse, but it may be the imposition on others of discourses and practices to do with language that constitutes the hegemonic relation – and not the language as an agency itself.

Wodak (1989) echoes a similar belief when she states “language only gains power in the hands of the powerful; language is not powerful ‘per se’. Often enough, a specific language even symbolizes the group or person in power...” (Wodak, 1989:xv). Consequently, Blommaert believes the assertion that multilingualism in Africa is viewed as problematic itself is where the dilemma lies. The fact remains that multilingualism in Europe is cherished as part of the unique European heritage, while in Africa⁶³ this same situation is viewed as one of the causes of underdevelopment and chaos (Fardon & Furniss, 1994).

Moreover, the legacy of colonialism has led to the development of educational programs which require students to receive all or part of their education through the medium of an L2, a language which typically has national, official, or international status. Crandall (1997) mentions a number of countries in which this practice takes place referring to these countries as “outer circle” countries, which include countries such as Botswana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, or Zambia. In these countries English is the primary language of only a few students, simultaneously it is generally used as a medium of instruction despite the fact that many students have a different

⁶³ Again the discussion concerning missionary influence presented in 3.3 is important.

mother tongue. She also declares that English as a medium of instruction is becoming more common in elite bilingual schools in Asian, Central or South American countries from increasingly earlier grades (cf Phillipson, 1997). Crandall (1997) prefers the term primary language as opposed to “home language” or “mother tongue” stating that many languages may be spoken at home and that the primary language may be the father’s language and not that of the mother. Although I agree with Crandall, in this thesis I prefer to use the term mother tongue given that it is the term most widely used by the informants in this investigation to describe the home or primary language of the learners and by many of the researchers in South Africa. Thus research reports that are written in language that is not comprehensible to those studied may be seen as invalid. Furthermore, this dissertation is viewed as a document that may be of use to the schools participating in this study, therefore, the terminology I choose should, to a certain extent, correspond to the language used by the participants.

Those concerned with social equality maintain that “the use of a familiar language as the language of instruction is central for class-room learning” (Brock-Utne, 2002b:2). This statement is echoed by Klaus (2001:1) who remarks, “there appears to be general agreement that students learn better when they understand what the teacher is saying.” In relation to the statement by Klaus, Brock-Utne (2002b:3) argues:

The social injustice arises from the fact that the language used for instruction means a barrier to knowledge for the masses of African children. The use of a language of instruction and a culture most children are familiar with would signify on the part of governments a willingness to embark on the necessary redistribution of power between the elites and the masses.

On a similar note, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:596) asserts:

There are many analyses of causes of ‘illiteracy’, of what could be done and what is being done. What is still lacking is reliable information about how large a percentage of the ‘illiterates’ in the world belong to populations who, if they were to go to schools or courses, would have to accept instruction through the medium of a second or foreign language and how many are absolutely or, especially, functionally ‘illiterate’ because they have been taught through the medium of a foreign or second language.

This quote by Skutnabb-Kangas emphasizes perhaps one of the major effects of education that requires learners to receive all or part of their education through a foreign medium of instruction. Other researchers have also suggested that education through a foreign medium

may also contribute to the illiteracy rate. Heugh argues “if you haven’t grasped the basics of reading and writing in your own language, you’re unlikely to develop reading and writing proficiency in another language” (Financial Mail, 2001:33). According to Carole Bloch of PRAESA their research concludes that roughly 3 billion Rand in teachers’ salaries is being wasted annually, primarily because learners are not being taught and assessed in their mother tongue (Lund, 2002). Finally, Zubeida Desai, former deputy chair of PANSALB argues:

The tendency for urban township schools to bring forward the use of English as the medium of instruction is backfiring. Instead of making African students more proficient in English, the early withdrawal of mother-tongue instruction retards students’ literacy and numeracy, especially their ability to grasp fundamental maths and science concepts (Financial Mail, 2001:32).

Moreover, Blommaert (1999:section 2.2) declares that “control over writing and literacy [in Africa] as sources and instruments of learning and information-gathering (or production) is very unevenly distributed; literacy is a class-bound phenomenon”. This suggests that relations between the dominant-culture and the minority-culture dictate that the minority parents are unable to use their own literacies (i.e. literacy in their mother tongue) given that it is the dominant culture that decides what constitutes literacy and in what language. With this in mind I now examine the concept of literacy and the various definitions and meanings of the term.

4.3.1 Literacy

What do we mean by *literacy*? It has been argued that “literacy does not necessarily have the same meaning or function in all societies, or in all communities within a society” (Blackledge, 2000:56). According to McKay (1993:2) the term *illiteracy*, itself a controversial term, is often contrasted with literacy, “as if individuals either are or are not literate. Such a dichotomy is a tremendous oversimplification”. Crandall points to the changing perspectives concerning literacy and argues that:

Dichotomies such as “literacy-illiteracy” or “functional literacy-functional illiteracy” are simplistic and reductionist, and the statistics of illiteracy which they engender, equally so. The complex notion of literacy cannot be captured by any one definition of skills, functions, or practices. This is especially true for language minority [/majority] individuals, whose differential allocation of literacy across languages is complex” (Crandall, 1992:88).

Accordingly Hamers and Blanc (2000) believe that the literacy-illiteracy issue should be viewed along a continuum and not defined as a dichotomy. Many researchers also agree that defining literacy is difficult (Street, 1984, 2000; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; McKay, 1993) and that one of the problems of definition is specifying what practices are required to be considered literate (Street 1984, 2000; McKay, 1993). This is particularly complicated when discussing literacy in an additional language. Rubagumya (1991) contends that literacy may be defined as the ability to read and write in *any* language whereas Kingsley Banya from Sierra Leone appears to have a very different understanding of literacy. In an article written by Banya (1993) discussing illiteracy in Sierra Leone he puts forth the following argument:

Only about 25% of the country's population were (in 1961) literate in English, which is the official language. However, most people are literate in Krio, which is the lingua franca of the country....in absolute numbers there has been a tremendous expansion in the number of illiterates. As the population has increased, the number of literate people has not kept pace; 85 out of every 100 Sierra Leones are now illiterate (Banya, 1993:163).

It appears that Banya defines illiteracy in Sierra Leone as not being able to read and write in English although these same people may read and write in Krio, the lingua franca of the country. Ironically, Brock-Utne (2000a:164) points out that "if a native Englishman who reads and writes English but not any other language were likewise classified as illiterate there would be many illiterates in the English-speaking⁶⁴ world". What I am highlighting here is that the literacy requirement should be a two-way street and that the literacy statistics for Africa (as well as other parts of the world) should include information on the mother tongues of the masses and not just the power languages. This would send a positive message with reference to these languages and by acknowledging them as a functional tool they would be valorized.

Moreover, the definition of literacy has gone from simple reading and writing, to UPE and functional and even now in some cases includes computer literacy (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Some may adopt the definition of functional literacy advocated by UNESCO in 1962, with the

⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that there are, for example, many English-speaking professionals working in academia or NGOs around the world who never bother to learn the language(s) of their host country, a country they may spend several years in.

underlying premises that can be identified as those of the ‘autonomous’ model of literacy (Street, 1984).

A person is literate when he [*sic*] has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him [*sic*] to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community, and whose attainment in reading, writing, and arithmetic make it possible for him [*sic*] to continue to use these skills towards his [*sic*] own and the community’s development (International Committee of Experts on Literacy Report, UNESCO, Paris, 1962, cited in McKay, 1993:4).

Street (1984) claims that this functional view of literacy supported development efforts and literacy programs world-wide for a number of years. Furthermore, he argues that “the concept of functional literacy disguises the relationship of a particular literacy programme to the underlying political and ideological framework [and that] the earlier UNESCO input...was in fact tied to a particular developmental and economic ethos” (Street, 1984:184). Currently UNESCO has reassessed this understanding of literacy based on the belief that “the conception of literacy has moved beyond its simple notion as the set of technical skills of reading, writing and calculating – the so-called “three Rs” – to a plural notion encompassing the manifold meanings and dimensions of these undeniably vital competencies” (UNESCO, 2004:6). The reason being that:

[The]...recent economic, political and social transformations, including globalization, and the advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs), recognizes that there are many practices of literacy embedded in different cultural processes, personal circumstances and collective structures (UNESCO, 2004:6).

In its normative function UNESCO has provided a generic definition of literacy. However, in light of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and the understanding that literacy is much more than simple technical skills, UNESCO has proposed a new definition of literacy to “capture the full complexity and diversity of literacy across the spectrum of its acquisition and application” (UNESCO, 2004:13). A proposed operational definition for measurement purposes, in particular, was formulated during an international expert meeting in June 2003 at UNESCO:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO, 2004:13).

UNESCO suggests that this proposed definition encompasses the different dimensions of literacy. It is argued that this “plurality of literacy refers to the many ways in which literacy is employed and the many things with which it is associated in a community or society and throughout the life of an individual” (UNESCO, 2004:13). Furthermore, UNESCO acknowledges that people acquire and apply literacy for different purposes in different situations and that this is shaped by culture, history, language, religion and socio-economic conditions. This notion of literacy considers it not as a mere technical skill, but incorporates the diverse social practices associated with it (Street, 1984, 2000).

Moreover, McKay (1993) argues that some researchers have rejected UNESCO’s historical definition of functional literacy on the grounds that it is defined as a personal attribute as opposed to a social practice (Street, 1984). She refers to Fisher (1978 cited in McKay, 1993:4-5) who argues that individuals should be considered functionally literate although they are not able to pass a reading and writing test if they possess the ability to cope in an environment where print is required. These individuals are defined as functionally literate through oral means and an awareness of nonverbal cues, which allows them to function on a satisfactory level in certain contexts. Street (1984, 2000) argues that literacy is a social practice which he characterizes as the ‘ideological’ model of literacy. According to Street (1984) literacy is ideological because both its meanings and practices emanate from a particular world-view, and from specific cultural practices. This can be seen through the work of Graff (1979: cf 189-192) who questions the ‘myth’ that the acquisition of literacy leads to social mobility, overcoming of poverty and ‘self-fulfillment’. Graff (1979) draws on the example of the process of schooling and literacy acquisition for different ethnic groups and occupational groups in Canadian cities in the nineteenth century. The argument suggests that greater literacy does not correlate with increased equality and democracy nor with better working conditions for the working class, instead it correlates with continuing social stratification (Graff, 1979). In this case literacy was joined with the ideology of the teachers in the sense that it was used as part of the elaboration of the moral foundation of behavior and of social

control. Street (1984) makes use of the analysis by Graff to help support the basis for his ideological model of literacy arguing that:

In nineteenth century Canada, the concept of a 'literate' or 'illiterate' person was seldom an independent, neutral one. It was a normative one...Isolated from its social relations, literacy takes on a reified and symbolic significance unwarranted by its own, more restricted influences. Thus, to the middle class, 'illiterates' were conceived as dangerous to the social order, as alien to the dominant culture, inferior and bound up in a culture of poverty. As such they represented a threat to the established order and the effort to increase literacy rates was a political move to maintain the position of the ruling group (Street, 1984:105).

However, Street (1984) claims that the teaching of literacy was not without contradictions and that the framework for teaching literacy had to be strictly controlled by the ruling class.

This involved specific forms of control of the pedagogic process itself and specific ideological associations of the literacy being purveyed. The workers had to be convinced that it was in their interests to learn the kind of literacy on offer, in the kinds of institutions in which it was taught, but had to be restrained from taking control of it for themselves or developing their own alternative conceptions of it (Street, 1984:105).

As such the minds of the dominated were influenced in such a way that they accepted the dominance (Van Dijk, 2001). Certainly the type of literacy suggested by Freire (1970) was not to be provided (I will present Freire's discussion later in this section). Indeed, the argument by both Graff (1979) and Street (1984) are useful in looking at the power conception of literacy in this investigation. For the majority black population in South Africa literacy has been both a political and ideological practice.

Hamers and Blanc (2000) propose a similar argument as Street (1984) and maintain that there are a number of researchers who view literacy along a social collective dimension, in this view literacy is seen as a social practice and thus a form of "linguistic capital" (Bourdieu, 1991).

This view marks it off from both a psychological, skill-oriented model of literacy as a purely cognitive activity divorced from the socio-political context, and from a narrow pedagogical perspective. In this approach literacy is a 'cultural capital', which must be 'authorised', that is, valorised by society as a whole for the benefit of all. While schooling undoubtedly promotes specific literacy practices, it is a necessary but not sufficient condition of literacy development, for it produces different kinds and levels

of literacy reflecting power relations in society. In other words, there is no one single literacy that can be taught with simple equivalent value in cultural capital. The school-based literacy practices, therefore, are not sufficient to guarantee economic and social gains to all who demonstrate them. To improve the access to academic and cultural capital of, for example, subordinate ethnolinguistic groups, would require, if it is to be effective, intervention from two directions (Hammers & Blanc, 2000:319-320).

First of all intervention must come from valued social institutions and secondly from what Fairclough (1995:217) identifies as *critical language awareness* (CLA). Fairclough believes that “not only is education itself a key domain of linguistically mediated power, it also mediates other key domains for learners” such as the world of work. CLA allows for an analysis and critique of the power relations that exist in particular discourses and text, and which includes the language of instruction. Based on the work of Freire (1985) and Giroux (1983)⁶⁵ it is proposed that through CLA⁶⁶ schools committed to critical pedagogy should allow for a critical understanding of the problems and oppression that cannot be resolved just in school while simultaneously providing them with the necessary resources (knowledge and social relations), which in turn become the foundation for struggles in various social domains, including education (Fairclough, 1995). Giroux (1983) also believes that the debate surrounding literacy and education is important given that it highlights the ways in which the production of “school knowledge” and meanings are determined by the wider power relations within society. He argues that the debate defining literacy in mechanical and functional terms, which reduces it to the mastery of fundamental skills, designates literacy as “the new admission ticket for the poor in their attempt to enter an economy that regards them as second-class citizens” (Giroux, 1983:206).

Blackledge points out that in multilingual settings, roles and social meanings should be understood in connection with language and literacy choices. He also contends that:

Literacy does not simply consist of a universally defined set of skills constant across time and place. Since cultures differ in what they consider to be their “texts” and in the values they attach to these, they will also differ in what they regard as literate behavior. The same person may be regarded as ‘illiterate’ in one culture, while appearing to be quite literate in another culture (Blackledge, 2000:56-57).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Giroux (1983) uses both the term radical pedagogy as well as critical pedagogy.

⁶⁶ In section 4.2 critical approaches have been discussed in more detail, in particular CDA (based mainly on the work by Fairclough and Van Dijk), which is then used as an analytical tool in the investigation of the LiEP and the ideology behind it.

⁶⁷ Another issue that may be contemplated is being literate in only one script. A number of years ago I lived and worked in China and although I learned enough Chinese to be able to survive I only knew one script thus I could

I also argue that when several languages co-exist in the same society a range of languages found in the society should be included in what constitutes as being literate. This lack of adequately addressing the role of languages in education and literacy, in particular, is highlighted by Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1996) who emphasize the fact that in much educational policy work, even in policies on education for all, the role of language is seldom considered. This shows shortsightedness on the part of the donors and the researchers who guide them as they urge targets for universal literacy to be set, but give little thought as to the language in which literacy should be achieved. It is also odd that many reports on education in Africa either make no mention of the language situation in Africa or they may mention the need only to improve English.⁶⁸

There is an ongoing argument that both education in general and specifically literacy education are among the primary institutions that transmit ideological power. Freire states that education either serves to perpetrate existing social relations or it challenges them.⁶⁹ In a Foreword to the book “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” Shaul (1970:16) echoes this belief:

There is no *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes “the practice of freedom,” the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (emphasis original).

not read nor write the language. Interestingly enough, Birgit Brock-Utne had a similar experience during her sabbatical in 2002 where she spent 4 months in Japan. Before leaving, she learned to speak Japanese, her sixth language. However, she soon discovered that speaking the language was perhaps not enough. One day she had an appointment in town and when she arrived at her destination there was a sign on the door explaining that she had to go around to the side door. However, she was unable to read the script and assumed the staff was at lunch given that there were some numbers on the sign, the only thing she could understand. Later that day she was discussing the issue with a colleague from Sri Lanka who interestingly asked if she was only literate in one script. Brock-Utne admitted that this is something she had never even considered. Thus when discussing the issue of literacy we may not only consider what language, but perhaps what script as well.

⁶⁸ During a previous study I conducted in Namibia in 2000 (cf Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b) the focus on the need to improve English was considerable, especially considering that it was chosen as the sole official language. This extreme focus on English only, at the expense of the African languages, has not been as successful as predicted. During my fieldwork in the country I was present at an in-house seminar at the National Institute for Education Development (NIED). In the seminar the British Council, who has been the leading donor in the improvement of English in the country since independence, discussed the results of a major study they had just completed on the improvement of English. The results suggested that the implementation of English in Namibian schools has not been as successful as they had expected and that teacher knowledge, those who recently graduated from the teacher-training colleges, is a major concern. In fact, it was mentioned that those who have been teaching for sometime were actually more proficient in English than the new graduates.

⁶⁹ Fairclough (1995) argues that a critical language awareness based on the work of Freire will provide the necessary tools needed to challenge the existing hegemony. This is also similar to the work by Giroux (1983) who argues for a critical pedagogy.

Thus the way in which knowledge is defined in relation to the learners reflects a perspective about power and the sociopolitical context. As a result a number of issues need to be considered: What counts as knowledge and in what language (in what language⁷⁰ should learners be considered literate)? These questions should be considered in order to understand the mechanisms of power within educational practice. Furthermore, Freire (1970) describes the dominant approach to education, which mirrors the oppressive society as the *banking concept* of education. This model of education views the teacher's responsibility to "fill" the students, who are seen as empty vessels, with information that is considered to constitute "true knowledge" (Freire, 1970:57). This knowledge is viewed as neutral and objective and a scientifically based commodity to be transmitted to the learners. Auerbach (1995) argues that knowledge serves the ideological function of legitimating certain forms of knowledge and educational practice, usually that of the dominant culture, which assures the dominance of those in power. Street (1984) argues that many representations of literacy can be equated with this type of ideological function. Hence, Street (1984, 2000) views the traditional conception of literacy (the 'autonomous' model) as a 'neutral' technology and includes a set of universal, decontextualized cognitive skills that exist independently and based on the hegemony of the ruling class. Yet, in his argument Street (1984:1) challenges this view, proposing instead an 'ideological' model of literacy, which views literacy as bound in the "social practices and conceptions of reading and writing". Thus for Street (2000:21 emphasis original) 'literacy practices' as a concept is used to "handle the events and the patterns of activity around literacy...[and] to link them to something broader of a cultural and social kind". For Auerbach (1995) the 'autonomous' model of literacy:

...is a way of privileging one group's literacy and discourse practices over others', and it is, as much, a mechanism for perpetuating the status quo. Recognizing one culture-specific set of literacy practices (namely those of the mainstream, dominant culture) and elevating it to universal status gives differential access to those who use it. (Auerbach, 1995:11).

It is exactly this issue of access to literacy that is relevant to this study and that by promoting literacy after Grade 4 in English only, in many South African schools for the black majority population, gives differential access to those who have the language as their mother tongue and for those to whom the language is an additional language.

⁷⁰ The case of Sierra Leone and the discussion of literacy by Banya (1993), presented above, with the argument against his line of reasoning by Brock-Utne (2000a) serves as an ideal example in considering the answer to this question.

As language use is embedded in context-specific social practices and traditions, different cultural contexts demand a plurality of different literacy practices, using, for example, oral communication, problem-solving and decision-making, as well as written communication skills. In all this the issue of the 'language(s)' of instruction is paramount....The choice of the language medium through which literacy is achieved is an essential issue in a multicultural setting (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:320).

It may also be argued that the degree of multilingualism on the African continent does not in itself account for the "problems" of language in education, but rather the issue of literacy is a major concern. In South Africa the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal in 2000 stated that there are 20 million people in South Africa that are not fluent readers in any language. I have been unable to find written confirmation of this statement (I received the information by way of a personal communication from Tove Skutnabb-Kangas in October, 2002). In an attempt to support this statement I have raised the issue with several South African educational researchers and they agree that the Minister has most likely made such a statement. Furthermore, I have located written sources (Karras, 1997) that estimate the adult illiteracy rates, in South Africa, as high as 65% in 1997, which equals roughly 26 million South Africans. Yet, World Bank figures put this number at roughly 13 million for the same year. However, despite the lack of congruence given by various sources the fact remains that there is still a high rate of functional illiteracy in the country and that this may be attributed, in part, to the language issue (McKay, 1993). Moreover, it is noted that these figures, from Karras (1997) and the World Bank, do not indicate in what language(s) literacy is specified (one or all of the official South African languages). In addition, I am not equating literacy simply with the ability to read only, as argued in this section, but the inability to read sufficiently certainly contributes to the debate. Thus the important issue is that the deficiencies are being placed here in the political, economical and educational arenas and not on the learners, parents and teachers themselves (for an in depth discussion of second/additional language literacy cf McKay, 1993). Moreover, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) maintains that the dilemma concerning illiteracy figures is partially because a majority of learners in the country receive their education in a language other than their mother tongue and although illiteracy rates for Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes South Africa, have improved from 59.8% in 1980 to 43.2% in 1995 there is still cause for concern when compared to total world figures of 22.6% in 1995 (cf table 4.1). Yet, in this table literacy in *what language* is not specified and thus the numbers need to be questioned. Furthermore, it is possible to ask: what these numbers are based on: participation in class, self-reports, etc.?

Table 4.1: Adult illiteracy rates in 1995

	Least Developed	Sub-Saharan Africa	World
Total	51,2%	43,2%	22,6%
Male	40,5%	33,4%	16,4%
Female	61,9%	52,7%	28,8%

(Source: UNESCO World Yearbook 1998 <<http://www.unesco.org/>>)

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) maintains that the main **pedagogical** reason for illiteracy throughout the world is due to the use of non-forms or weak forms of bilingual education (cf 4.5 for a detailed discussion of bilingual education), that is a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction as opposed to the mother tongue and that the global literacy figures are noted as both unreliable and often difficult to interpret.⁷¹ It is also argued that literacy statistics for Africa “do not include persons literate in languages other than official ones”, in particular English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (Armove & Graff, 1992:285). According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) there is also no globally recognized statistical information on illiteracy in the mother tongue. Furthermore, McKay (1993) believes when we are dealing with learners of additional languages that it is important to qualify literacy in reference to a particular language. Acquiring literacy in an additional language, in part, depends on social, political, and educational factors (Bialystok, 2001) and these factors may have a profound effect on the acquisition of literacy in this new language.

⁷¹ In a meeting set up to discuss the new Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) organized by UNESCO and the World Bank at UIS, Montreal (Canada), 8-10 January 2003, which is to be managed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics the following statement was made by the participants regarding literacy on a global scale: “The literacy **statistics currently available** are inadequate. Countries use different definitions and measurements of literacy compounding the comparability problem. Furthermore the quality of the data are often poor” (www.uis.unesco.org: Meeting for defining a final strategy and planning the programme page 1). In this document no mention was made on whether literacy was to be assessed in the mother tongue, as it is in most **developed** countries, or if it is to be assessed in an additional language, as the case is in many **developing** countries and former colonies. Furthermore, in a pamphlet issued by UNESCO, which provides information about the LAMP the following information regarding literacy measurements is made available: The survey aims to assess a range of literacy levels from what is described as “the most basic to higher-level skills... Some people cannot read or write at all. Others have basic literacy skills, but limited ability to apply them to everyday tasks. All countries need people with higher-level literacy skills if they are to develop economically. At the same time, many countries still face a big task in teaching all their people just to read and write. Thus there is no single threshold at which literacy skills are sufficient: a range of skills must be measured” (www.uis.unesco.org: LAMP pamphlet page 4). This pamphlet also does not mention what language literacy should be in.

Over and above the view of literacy as an individual skill, literacy is also discussed from a sociohistorical perspective (McKay, 1993). This view considers literacy within a specific historical, economic, political, and cultural framework. Here literacy definitions are seen as changing over time, therefore, the literacy values and standards for that time period determine the requirements necessary to be defined as literate. McKay argues that those who emphasize the economic value of literacy highlight the advantages both on a national and individual level. She, furthermore, claims that the economic valuing of literacy may very often be found in government policies. From a political perspective literacy positions people in society and it may provide the means to transform the society. This line of reasoning coincides with the critical language awareness argument provided by Fairclough, which is based on the work of Freire and Giroux. Literacy is viewed as a tool for empowering individuals in order to transform their lives. Lastly, from a sociocultural perspective literacy is viewed as something that exists between people and something that connects individuals to a variety of experiences. Thus different groups have different uses of literacy and different combinations of both oral and written language.

Different cultures may embody different notions of what it means to be a competent member of a particular language community. Speakers who know a non-standard form [non-dominant or unofficial language(s)] of a language may not regard it as a “real” language, particularly when they have been schooled in the standard [dominant or official] variety. Since literacy may play an important part in definitions of proficiency, individuals who know a language but cannot read and write it, may say that they don’t know that language very well (Romaine, 1995:16).

Likewise, in the educational arena those responsible for planning often find themselves on two opposite ends of the spectrum regarding literacy achievement (Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

1. Literacy is most effectively achieved in the mother tongue;
2. It is most effectively achieved in a language of wider communication which possesses a written culture and economic power (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:320).

The first contention focuses on pedagogical concerns and in its extreme form leads to education exclusively in the mother tongue. This is the norm for majority populations and not necessarily for immigrant minorities in developed countries and a practice for the majority that is not questioned in this context. Here learners are able to follow the entire curriculum from preschool to the university level often in one language. The second line of reasoning focuses its argument on more economic terms and in its extreme form also leads to

monolingual education in an official language, often a so-called international language (for example, English, French, Portuguese, etc.), a language of power, which is generally not the child's mother tongue (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Between these two extreme poles a variety of education models can be found that combine both the mother tongue and additional language(s) in various ways. In African countries, as one example, "part or whole of elementary school is taught through the child's mother tongue and then education is continued through the exogenous official language, [frequently] English or French. However, this switch [transition] is often not planned through a bilingual education program and children are not always prepared for it" (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:321). It is precisely this transition from mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction that is the main focus of this research (cf the objectives of the study in 1.3).

4.4 Bilingualism: exploring the field

Mackey (1968) maintains that the study of bilingualism is an inter-disciplinary science. It therefore requires more than just the discipline of linguistics to research the field.

Bilingualism cannot be described within the science of linguistics, we must go beyond. Linguistics has been interested in bilingualism only in so far as it could be used as an explanation for changes in a language...Psychology has regarded bilingualism as an influence on mental processes. Sociology has treated bilingualism as an element in culture conflict. Pedagogy has been concerned with bilingualism in connection with school organization and media of instruction...Each discipline...will add from time to time to the growing literature on bilingualism (Mackey, 1968:583).

According to Appel and Muysken (1987) there are two types of bilingualism that may be described: *societal* and *individual* bilingualism. These researchers argue that societal bilingualism occurs in a society where two or more languages are spoken and so in this sense nearly all societies are bilingual. Hamers and Blanc (2000) prefer to use the term 'bilinguality' to refer to individual bilingualism and the term 'bilingualism' then refers to societal bilingualism. Societies may also differ to the degree and form of bilingualism and as a result Appel and Muysken propose three forms of bilingualism, but argue that these are only theoretical types "which do not exist in a pure form in the world we live in" and that "different mixtures are much more common" (Appel & Muysken, 1987:2). In the first form two different groups speak the two languages and each group is monolingual. It is suggested that in this situation there are a few bilingual individuals that ensure communication between

the groups. This form of societal bilingualism is said to have occurred often in former colonial countries. The colonizers spoke their own language (for example, English, French or Portuguese) and the native people spoke a local language. In the second form all people are said to be bilingual and that “approximations to such a form of societal bilingualism can be found in African countries and in India” (Appel & Muysken, 1987:2). It may be argued, however, that in this situation not all people were bilingual, as the colonizers generally did not speak the language(s) of the colonized. Thus they did not learn the local language and only the inhabitants could then be defined as bilingual. In the third form it is maintained that one group is monolingual and another is bilingual. This suggests that in many cases the minority (in the sociological sense and not necessarily numerically) or non-dominant group will be bilingual and the dominant group is monolingual (Appel & Muysken, 1987). It may be argued that this form can be found in many post-colonial settings where the ex-colonial languages are often learned by those who have been dominated, but the dominant group (often a tiny elite) have not learned the language(s) of the majority. Hamers and Blanc (2000:1) contend, “with globalization and increasing population movements due to immigration and greater geographical and social mobility, and with the spread of education, contacts between cultures and individuals are constantly growing”. As a result of these situations languages come into contact with one another often resulting in bilingualism. What does it mean when several languages come into contact in a community and what are the effects on the individual?

Bialystok (2001:1) asks us to picture the bilingual child in relation to a number of questions: What languages does this child speak? What kind of neighborhood does she [*sic*] live in? What are the educational arrangements that either support or demand bilingualism? Are any of the child’s languages spoken in the community outside the home? What were the circumstances that led to her [*sic*] bilingualism? By changing anyone of the answers to these questions, we describe a child with very different experiences. In asking these questions we also need to consider the following: “How do we decide who is bilingual” (Bialystok, 2001:1)? In an attempt to answer this question it is useful to review the various ways in which bilingualism has been defined.

4.4.1 *Defining bilingualism*

When I use the term ‘bilingualism’, this should generally be understood as ‘bi- and multilingualism’. Bilingualism as a goal implies by definition that (at least) two languages are involved. When dominant language representatives use the concept, they seem mostly to confine their interest in bilingualism to one of the languages and one of the groups only: the learning of the majority/dominant language by minority children. The mother tongues of the minority children are in most cases tolerated as parts of the curriculum only if the teaching of (or in) them leads to a better proficiency in the majority language... (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:571).

Agreeing with Skutnabb-Kangas in her use of the term bilingualism I also use the term in this study to refer to bi- and multilingualism in the same manner (cf Weinrich, 1953:1 who includes multilingualism as part of bilingualism). It is also argued that the definitions of bilingualism vary depending on whether the educational goal is defined by the minority or majority group (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Thus analyses of these definitions by each group are also seen as important. Furthermore, it is argued that due to the variation in definitions it is essential to define bilingualism every time it is used.

Definitions of bilingualism are, as previously mentioned (cf chapter 1), numerous and even contradictory. Many of them also do not capture the specific situation that is the focus of this research⁷² and which I argued may not necessarily conform to the traditional understanding of the term, instead it may be closer to what we may define as foreign language learning (cf 4.6.2). However, many researchers have defined the various language groups found in many developing countries, which are required to receive their education in a medium other than their mother tongue and additionally a language that is in many respects foreign in their communities, as bilingual in the classic sense (cf Appel & Muysken, 1987; Bialystok, 2001; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Romaine, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000 among others). This is also how these groups are defined by their respective Education Ministries. Here I am then

⁷² It is important to note that the project leader Prof. Brock-Utne in the original project proposal initially questioned the appropriateness of terms such as bilingualism. In the proposal Brock-Utne argues that these theories (specifically theories of bilingualism), developed mainly in the North to describe the language-learning situation of immigrant minorities in host countries, may not be appropriate when used to describe the language-learning situation found in many post-colonial settings. Thus in this dissertation I have attempted to focus on this situation and as a result have developed my own arguments which look at the difference between foreign language learning and second language acquisition (cf section 4.6 where I develop my own argument).

questioning the use of and appropriateness of these terms in relation to majority groups⁷³ in post-colonial contexts. I argue that there is a need to better understand these groups and in relation to the terminology used. By simply using terminology developed as a result of research on immigrant groups and by transferring such models to these post-colonial contexts we may be attempting to fit square pegs in round holes. Thus there is a need to understand these groups in relation to their own contexts. Whether we use the terms bilingualism, second language acquisition, or foreign language learning we need to understand i.e. the Xhosa speaking community in relation to these labels and by our own use of such labels how we as researchers define the group's parameters with respect to language possibilities.

Romaine (1995) argues that bilingualism has very often been defined and described with regard to categories, scales, and dichotomies i.e. ideal vs. partial bilingual, coordinate vs. compound bilingual, which are related to proficiency and function. Bloomfield's (1933:56) definition of bilingualism is seen as being on one end of the spectrum where he specifies a "native-like control of two languages" as necessary to fit the criteria of bilingualism. Appel and Muysken (1987) challenge this psychological approach to defining bilingualism in terms of proficiency given that it is difficult to find a general norm or standard for proficiency. Conversely, attention is given to Haugen (1953:7 emphasis original) who lies on the other end of the spectrum where he observes that bilingualism begins when "the speaker of one language can produce *complete, meaningful utterances* in the other language". While other researchers (cf Appel & Muysken, 1987; Romaine, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) prefer a sociological definition based on Weinreich's (1953:1) work that "the practice of alternatively using two languages will be called *bilingualism*, and the persons involved *bilinguals*".

For the purpose of this study then I propose to follow the definition in accordance with that of Appel and Muysken, which I believe allows for greater individual and group variation. Thus their definition is as follows:

⁷³ Brock-Utne (1998) notes that in developing countries majorities are often treated the way minorities are in so-called developed countries. Thus a minority group is characterized by its powerlessness to define the nature of its relation to the powerful majority, and thus define its own identity. Appel and Muysken (1987) argue that a minority group is not necessarily a numerical minority, but rather in the sociological sense a non-dominant group or oppressed group. It is in this way the Xhosa speaking group in this study could be defined as a minority although numerically they would represent a majority group. Additionally there are members of this language group that are also part of the dominant group, those in power, but they fall under the definition of an 'elite' group and thus are not seen as a minority or oppressed group in the same sense as the community members that participated in this study. I will, however, use the term majority, non-dominant or oppressed in referring to the group found in this study as I feel the need to steer away from the term minority and the connotations that are associated with it. Furthermore, in chapter 8 of this dissertation I propose an alternative to these terms.

Somebody who regularly uses two or more languages in alternation is a bilingual. Within this definition speakers may still differ widely in their actual linguistic skills, of course, but we should be careful not to impose standards for bilinguals that go much beyond those for monolinguals. The very fact that bilinguals use various languages in different circumstances suggests that it is their *overall* linguistic competence that should be compared to that of monolinguals. All too often imposing Bloomfield's criteria on bilinguals⁷⁴ has led to their stigmatization as being somehow deficient in their language capacities (Appel & Muysken, 1987:3 emphasis original).

Although the learners participating in this study do not generally use English (Afrikaans may be a possible L2 as well, but for the majority of blacks the L2 tends to be English) outside of the classroom they do use it inside the classroom and thus the additional language is used on a regular basis as defined above. Additionally, this definition allows for variation of linguistic competence within and between the language groups in South Africa, which is an important factor given that linguistic ability varies greatly between groups. Thus this sociological definition seems more appropriate in this context, which results in greater emphasis on sociological factors when dealing with language acquisition (cf section 4.6).

Furthermore, Bialystok (1991:1) gives several examples of the different types of conditions under which children become bilingual: (a) children can learn both languages simultaneously in the home; (b) the second language can be learned through submersion in a foreign culture (and here the relative status of the first and second language becomes critical in determining outcomes); or (c) the second language can be learned through immersion in foreign-language classrooms within the majority-language environment. If we take these three situations as the major ways in which children become bilingual then it may be concluded that *none* of them fits the situation that the students in this study experience. Moreover, Bialystok (1991:1) maintains that these differences in the circumstances in which children become bilingual “undermine most attempts to identify precise conditions for second-language acquisition... [Furthermore], where research has been attempted, the enterprise has often been rendered uninteruptible by the failure to account for, and sometimes even acknowledge, the critical differences among these situations”. It is precisely these differences that this research attempts to highlight. Some of these differences on the individual level may be related to the type of bilingualism that is achieved. I now turn my discussion to two types of bilingualism that are of particular relevance in this study.

⁷⁴ In section 1.4.2 I briefly draw attention to a number of definitions of bilingualism including Bloomfield's (1933:56) definition that a bilingual should possess “native-like control of two or more languages”.

4.4.2. Additive and subtractive bilingualism

In addition to the conditions under which children become bilingual there is also the need to distinguish between two socially defined types of bilingualism, namely *additive* and *subtractive* bilingualism⁷⁵ (Lambert, 1977). In additive bilingualism the first language (mother tongue) of the learner is maintained and supported while simultaneously adding a second language. Ellis (1994) maintains that this may occur when learners have a positive view of their own ethnic identity and of the target language (TL) and culture. Appel and Muysken (1987) add that the first language is not in danger of being replaced if it is seen as a prestigious language and if it is supported in many ways, for example, in the mass media. Other researchers contend that additive bilingualism “results when students add a second language to their intellectual tool-kit while continuing to develop conceptually and academically in their first language” (Cummins, 2000:37). “When second-language learning is part of a process of language shift away from the first or ‘home’ language, subtractive bilingualism results” (Appel & Muysken, 1987:102). Subtractive bilingualism occurs when the two languages in question are competing rather than complementary. Furthermore, it is argued that this may occur when the “minority child is schooled through an L2 socially more prestigious than his [/her] own mother tongue” (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:100). Brock-Utne (1998) argues then when it comes to language learning, majority children in Africa are treated as minority children or immigrant children in developed countries.

Hamers and Blanc (2000) propose a sociocultural and cognitive independence hypothesis related to the issue of subtractive and additive bilingualism, which may assist us in understanding the factors involved in the poor linguistic and scholastic results of many ethnolinguistic minorities. Troike (1984) has pointed out that the social and cultural factors may be more important than linguistic ones in influencing academic achievement. Troike (1984) provides an example of Finnish immigrants in Sweden and Australia. He contends that in Sweden the Finnish immigrants are viewed negatively by the Swedes, but in Australia the “Finns are viewed in terms of a number of positive (“Scandinavian”) stereotypes, and Finnish students do much better in school than do their counterparts in Sweden” (Troike, 1984:49-50). Based on this argument Hamers and Blanc (2000) propose that there are a number of immigrant groups who do not experience low SES conditions and that individuals in these

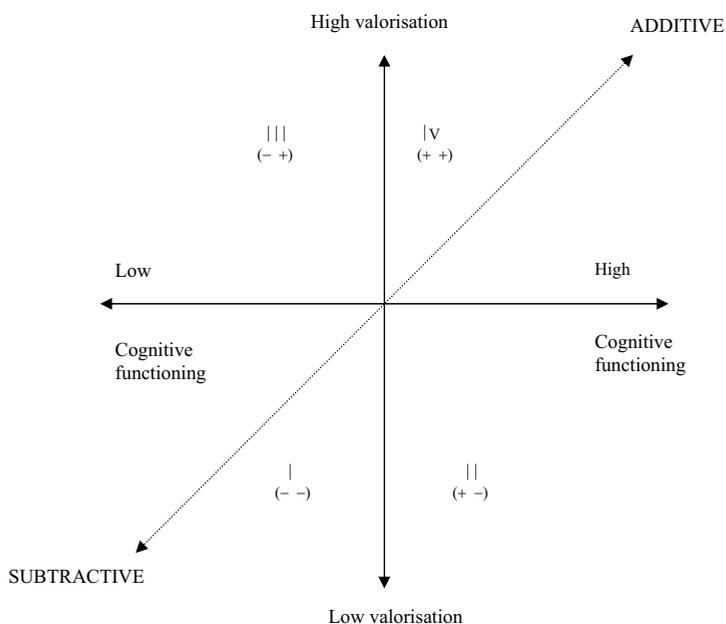
⁷⁵ This is particularly important given that the stated goal of the LiEP is that of additive multilingualism (DoE, 1997a:1).

groups perform linguistically and cognitively at least as well as monolinguals. They also argue that schooling is an important factor in the development of literacy. Given this they maintain that:

Schooling can be an important factor in the development of literacy. If we consider the two dimensions relevant to the development of additive bilinguality, that is the development of language in its cognitive use and the valorisation of language and language functions, several possibilities can occur, distributed on a continuum from additivity to subtractivity. At one end of the continuum there is the case of the child who lives in bilingual social environment at home, in which both languages are valorised around him [her] for both cognitive and communicative functions. At the other extreme there is the case of the child who lives in a unilingual home where the L1 is little valorised and not used for cognitive functions; furthermore the child is schooled exclusively in a highly valorised language, which is an L2 for him [her], but in which he [she] has at best a limited communicative competence; in addition he [she] has to acquire literacy through this language (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:106).

Along this continuum there are two dimensions. The first deals with “the cognitive functions of language, more specifically the ability to analyze language and control linguistic cues. The second...refers to the degree of valorization that the child attributes to language” (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:107). These researchers maintain that valorization is the result of the child’s internationalization of social values attributed to the languages in the community and the surrounding networks. The continuum presented in figure 4.1 highlights these two dimensions.

Figure 4.1: The sociocultural and cognitive dimensions of the additive-subtractive continuum.



(Source: Hamers & Blanc, 2000:107).

At the additive end of the continuum it is hypothesized that the cognitive function of language is greatly developed and both languages are highly valorized, which the child will then perceive as interchangeable and the overall cognitive functions will increase. On the other end of the continuum it is believed that “a child who is required to develop the cognitive literacy-oriented language skills in his [/her] first devalued language and who is required to [further] develop these skills in a socially more valorized language of which he [/she] has little or no knowledge is likely to develop a subtractive form of bilinguality” (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:107). It is also argued that despite the fact that not all the environmental factors and conditions that are beneficial to additive bilingualism have been fully identified these researchers suggest that this hypothesis raises a number of interesting questions. “To what extent is the child’s perception of these social factors more important than the factors themselves? To what extent can an additive form of bilinguality develop in a subtractive context” (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:107)?

In addition to the types of bilingualism discussed above the verbal repertoire of bilinguals that is their ability to use one or more languages when producing utterances, is also of relevance in this study.

4.4.3 Bilingual behavior – language alternation

Another area that needs to be discussed concerns the issue of bilingual behavior, namely the question of how and under what conditions do bilinguals keep their languages apart or mix them, a concept referred to as language alternation (Romaine, 1995). Language alternation refers to a concept known as code-switching. Code-Switching (CS) is a bilingual communication strategy consisting of the alternate use of two languages in the same utterance (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). This is contrasted with code-mixing (CM) in which the speaker of one language transfers elements or rules of a different language to the base language. It is important here to briefly explain the concepts of CS and CM⁷⁶ as it is understood and used in this study. Although there are a number of researchers that use these terms interchangeably (cf Bokamba, 1998; Ndayipfukamiye, 1993 and others; also for a comprehensive review cf Ferguson, 2002) I have opted to use them separately to highlight different strategies (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2002, 2003a; Holmarsdottir, 2002).

First of all, it is important to define what is meant by the word *code*. Taking the definition by Muriel Saville-Troike (1982) *code* simply means different languages. Below I define how Brock-Utne and I understand the terms code-switching and code-mixing⁷⁷ and how these concepts are then used in this investigation.

Definition Box 4.1: Code-switching and code-mixing

Code-switching refers to a switch in language that takes place *between* sentences, also called an *intersentential* change.

Code-mixing refers to a switch in language that takes place *within* the same sentence also called an *intrasentential* change.

⁷⁶ Due to space limitations I will not deal with this issue in detail. However, for a comprehensive discussion of code-switching and code-mixing see Myers-Scotton (1993:23-24) and Hamers and Blanc (2000, section 9.3). Also Poplack (1980) was among the first to propose a model that distinguished between types of code-switching.

⁷⁷ Saville-Troike (1982) prefers the terms *intersentential* as opposed to code-switching and *intrasentential* refers to code-mixing.

The interest in the study of code-switching and code-mixing is a relatively recent phenomenon as the presumed deviant nature of these strategies were previously judged against the monolingual paradigm of the ideal speaker-hearer in a homogenous speech community, who knows his [*sic*] language perfectly (Chomsky, 1965). Moreover, many view CM as a sign of linguistic decay (Appel & Muysken, 1987) and it is generally looked at more negatively indicating a lack of language competence in either language concerned whereas CS does not indicate a deficiency on the part of the speaker, but may result from complex bilingual skills (Appel & Muysken, 1987; Myers-Scotton, 1993). Brock-Utne (2003b) notes that code-switching as she has found it in Tanzania is often performed by teachers who are fluent in the language of instruction themselves but realize that their students do not understand while code-mixing may be performed by teachers who do not themselves know the language of instruction well. Romaine (1995:123) adds some support to this conclusion arguing that intersentential switching (code-switching) can be thought of as “requiring greater fluency in both languages...since major portions of the utterance must conform to the rules of both languages”. On the other hand, Romaine (1995) suggests that intrasentential switching (code-mixing) is attempted by only the most fluent bilinguals and Poplack (1980) suggests that fluent bilinguals tend to code-switch within sentences (what we refer to in our project as code-mixing or intrasentential change) whereas non-fluent bilinguals favor switching between sentences (intersentential change). Romaine (1995) does point out, however, that given the problem of terminology in that the terms code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing are not being used by all researchers in the same way, makes comparison across studies difficult. Ultimately what can be said is that code alternation is related to bilingual competence. Furthermore, Poplack concludes that in looking at code-switching there is the need to see how and if it is rule governed. What is also important to remember is the context in which the investigation takes place where Poplack was looking at immigrants in the US while our study looks at majority populations in their own country. Subsequently Saville-Troike (1982) points to the fact that children make more use of CM than adults, but that this use may be selective in order to stress a point. He suggests that there may also be a need to switch or mix code if the speaker knows the desired expression only in one language and cannot satisfactorily translate it into the second (other) language. This may fit the code-mixing situation in the South African context (cf 7.4.1.2).

Based on the functional model Appel and Muysken (1987:118-119 emphasis original) suggest that switching can be said to have six functions:

1. Switching can serve the **referential** function because it often involves lack of knowledge of one language or lack of facility in that language on a certain subject. Additionally, a certain word from one of the languages under consideration may be semantically more appropriate for a given concept and is known as topic-related switching. Bilingual speakers are said to be more conscious of this particular type of switching.
2. Switching may serve a **directive** function that directly involves the hearer. This function can take many forms such as exclusion of others from the conversation that do not understand the language used or inclusion of a person by using their language.
3. Switching is also said to have an **expressive** function, in which speakers emphasize a mixed identity through the use of two languages in the same discourse.
4. Often switching serves to indicate a change in tone of the conversation, and hence a **phatic** function..
5. The **metalinguistic** function is used when commenting directly or indirectly on the languages involved. An example given is when speakers switch between different codes to impress other participants with their linguistic skills.
6. The **poetic** function of language is described as the use of puns or jokes.

Alternatively, Ferguson (2002) describes the practice of CS in post-colonial societies and, particularly, in Africa as a major coping strategy used by teachers in situations where pupils have limited proficiency in the official language medium. There is, however, still no consensus on whether or not to use the students' mother tongue in the classroom. Larsen-Freeman (1991) points out that different teaching methodologies have definite opinions on the use of the mother tongue, for example, those subscribing to Community Language Learning (CLL) methodology draw freely upon students' mother tongue while Silent Way (SW)⁷⁸ teachers specifically avoid the use of the students' mother tongue in class. Yet, the literature highlighted by Ferguson shows support of the functionality of this practice although it still lacks legitimacy and is virtually neglected in teacher education. Official attitudes of this practice range from neutral to extremely negative. Nowhere is disapproval more clearly acknowledged than in Hong Kong where there have been repeated official calls for teachers to avoid what is referred to as "mixed code" teaching. Lin (1996:49) cites a South China Morning Post report (May 13th 1994) of Chris Patten, the last colonial governor of Hong Kong, saying:

⁷⁸ In Community Language Learning the teacher is seen as a counselor or facilitator of students' learning while the Silent way teacher is silent as much as possible so that it is the students who are manipulating the language and taking responsibility for their own learning. For more details on these methodologies see Larsen-Freeman (1991).

What we don't want is for young people to be taught in Chinglish rather than either English or Chinese and that's what we are trying to avoid at the moment.⁷⁹

While research has mainly emphasized, at least in the early years, the functions of switching it is argued that such functions are open-ended and Auer (1998) has indicated that the meanings generated by code juxtaposition are as unlimited as the discourse contexts in which switching occurs.

Ferguson (2002:14 emphasis original) does remind us, however, that:

...the distinction between content subject and language subject classes. In the former case, the principal aim is to ensure that pupils understand the subject matter, and whatever reasonable means contribute to that goal merits sympathetic consideration. Language acquisition here is a secondary objective. In the latter case, however, the argument for CS is less strong and would need separate discussion since the main aim is to teach a language, usually a distinct standardised code.

Furthermore, it is argued that a "detailed analysis of the sequential flow of classroom...[discourse] should not detract from complementary consideration of the wider sociolinguistic context" (Ferguson, 2002:2). Thus we need to consider both language attitudes and patterns of language use beyond the classroom which in all likelihood do impact on what happens within the classroom walls (Ferguson, 2002). Accordingly a micro-macro analysis is seen as necessary in highlighting how classroom practices reflect the wider sociolinguistic reality. Moreover, in his paper Ferguson highlights nine studies of Classroom CS in various post-colonial settings from both Asia and Africa. In his review of these studies, attention is drawn to three main functional categories found in each of the studies: CS for curriculum access, CS for classroom management discourse, and CS for interpersonal relations. In the second and third category there is some overlapping that occurs. Consequently, I argue that the categories discussed by Ferguson are more appropriate for use in this study given that it is based on actual classroom practice, particularly in post-colonial contexts, as opposed to those described by Appel and Muysken.

Auer (1998) demonstrates that CS does not have the same function in every community and that community members may switch or mix code for a variety of different reasons (cf the

⁷⁹ Patten refers here not to the local variety of English, Hong Kong English, but to the mixed code teaching prevalent in Hong Kong.

entire volume edited by Auer, 1998 for various examples in different contexts). This brings us to the area of the bilingual community and some important issues that need to be discussed.

4.4.4 Bilingual communities - diglossia

When speaking of bilingual societies, it does not necessarily refer to societies in which the population is bilingual as a whole. In some societies the majority of the population may be monolingual, but public institutions offer bilingual services. Yet, in other societies the situation may be reversed in that the majority population is bilingual and the public institutions may only offer services in one language. Accordingly, in a bilingual community the various languages are not always distributed equally. This inequality is often due to the functions of the respective languages, which in turn may be dependent on the status and use of the languages. The languages and language skills are often unevenly distributed in bilingual societies and some community members are not bilinguals whereas others have a high competency in both languages. In the case of South Africa, some people in the communities may be proficient in more than two languages. Therefore, in this case the term *both* is relative and highlights that some community members are more proficient in the languages than others. During the interviews that were conducted as part of the fieldwork for this investigation I discovered, for example, that some teachers spoke 4-5 languages while others struggled with two (for more details cf chapter 7).

Discussing the division of labor between the two (or more) languages involved requires a particular set of norms for the speakers and a functional specialization of the languages involved. Appel and Muysken (1987) suggest that this may be approached from a number of different perspectives, which include the society, the language, the speaker, interaction between speakers, or language function. Although I will not discuss these in detail here there are some issues that I find important to highlight.

Fishman (1965) argues that the *domain* where languages are used is an important factor and this takes social organization as its conceptual basis. The focus of this concept is that when speakers use two languages, they obviously will not use both languages in all circumstances and that in certain situations one language will be used as opposed to the other. This language choice involves various factors such as group membership, situation, and topic.

In *diglossia* the characteristics of the languages involved are an important point of departure. Charles Ferguson presented the classic definition of diglossia in his article in 1959 (cf Ferguson, 1972) and originally used the term to refer to a specific relationship between two or more varieties of the same language in use in a speech community in different functions.

Ferguson (1972) differentiates between a formal variety, termed H (high), and a vernacular or popular form, termed L (low). Each variety has its own functions in the speech community with the first being the written, literature-oriented variety, learned through formal education and used in formal situations. In a diglossic situation the formal variety is also seen as more prestigious and is often international and relatively stable. The Low variety is used for “informal conversation” with friends and family.

Additionally, some writers have extended the scope of diglossia from two dialects of the same language to two totally different languages (Fishman 1964, 1967; Macnamara 1967; Gumperz, 1971, 1972). Gumperz (1972) extended the term to multilingual situations referring to the social and functional distribution of languages whereas Fishman (1967) refers to the individual’s ability to use more than one code. Thus the differentiation between the two languages is according to function and domain, which is seen as a societal arrangement where individual bilingualism is prevalent and supported institutionally (Fishman, 1980).

The separate locations in which L and H are acquired immediately provide them with separate institutional support systems. L is typically at home as a mother tongue and continues to be used throughout life. Its use is also extended to other familial and familiar interactions. H, on the other hand, is learned later through socialization and never at home. H is related to and supported by institutions outside the home. Diglossic societies are marked not only by these compartmentalization restrictions, but also by access restrictions. That is, entry to formal institutions such as school and government requires knowledge of H (Romaine, 1995:34).

Finally Fasold (1984) maintains that stable (*broad*) diglossia evolves and changes over time. It is argued that diglossia “leaks” when one variety takes over the functions previously reserved for the other language(s). This breakdown of the diglossic relationships reflects power changes between groups. The result may be a variety mixture or the replacement of one language by another and thus the mother tongue may not be used throughout life as suggested above. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:72) argues that in a subtractive language learning situation the new dominant/majority language “is learned at the cost of the mother tongue [or L variety in Ferguson’s terms], which is displaced, with a diglossic situation as a consequence, and

sometimes replaced". This language shift may then result in eventual language loss or even language death (Appel & Muysken, 1987; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Holmarsdottir, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Additionally, there are those who state, "while popular opinion has it that a bilingual is someone who knows two languages fluently, we have seen that the concept of bilingualism is a relative notion. Factors other than proficiency, itself a relative concept too, have to be taken into account" (Romaine, 1995:22). Therefore, the type of bilingualism found in an individual or community will vary according to a number of other factors that need to be considered. Romaine (1995) also suggests that the separation between bilingualism as a societal and individual phenomenon is not a straightforward task. This she argues becomes evident when reviewing reasons why some individuals are or become bilingual and others do not. "Usually the more powerful groups in any society are able to force their language upon the less powerful" (Romaine, 1995:23). Here it may be said that in South Africa the whites (the mother tongue speakers of English and/or Afrikaans) do not have to learn African languages (the mother tongues of the majority population), but the black population (those who have the African languages as a mother tongue) has to learn English and/or Afrikaans (generally the mother tongue of the minority white population). It is important to mention here that although there is currently a trend in South Africa in some English-speaking schools to now teach Xhosa generally as a third language, the level of Xhosa expected of English-speaking children is much lower than the level of English expected of Xhosa-speaking children. In a recent study Biseth (forthcoming) visited an English-speaking school⁸⁰ in the Cape Town area that taught Xhosa as a subject in which she noted that the type of language that was expected of the English-speaking children was focused on simple everyday vocabulary as opposed to the academic vocabulary required of Xhosa-speaking children learning English.

Moreover, Hakuta (1986) comments that Haugen's (1953) definition, previously mentioned, includes a developmental aspect, which draws second language acquisition into the study of bilingualism. He argues that the investigation of bilingualism should include the

⁸⁰ During the year and seven months I spent in Cape Town while conducting this investigation my oldest son, age 13, attended a former Afrikaans only medium school. Since independence the school has added an English stream. Thus four classes, from Grade 1-7, are taught through the medium of Afrikaans only with English as a second language and six classes are taught in English only with Afrikaans as a second language. Furthermore, despite the large number of Xhosa mother tongue speakers in the school there is no teaching of Xhosa as a subject whatsoever and this is despite requests from both black and white parents. Obviously this sends a powerful message to the community of which languages are deemed valuable.

circumstances, which surround bilingualism namely its creation, maintenance, and attrition in addition to studying the bilingual individual. Thus Hakuta argues for a multidimensional approach to the study of bilingualism, which has been suggested as well by other researchers (Hamers and Blanc, 2000).⁸¹ In studying the creation and maintenance of bilingualism it is argued that bilingual education is seen as playing an important role. Thus I now turn my discussion to the issue of bilingual education and how it has been defined and debated in the literature. Subsequently I present three different models of bilingual education and the programs within these models.

4.5 Bilingual education

Bilingual education has been described as a system where a minority language has a certain role together with a majority language (Appel & Muysken, 1987). Others maintain that various programs involving the use of two or more languages may be defined as bilingual education. These researchers state “any system of education in which, at a given moment in time and for a varying amount of time, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and given in at least two languages” can be described as bilingual education (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:321). Equally, Cummins and Corson (1997:xi) emphasize, “the languages [in these bilingual programs] are used to teach subject matter content rather than just the language itself.” In this way they contrast bilingual education with foreign language education where the latter generally focuses on teaching only the target language and where the language is not used for teaching other content subjects. This is in line with the definition of bilingual education presented by Hamers and Blanc (2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000).

Skutnabb-Kangas follows the classic definition of bilingual education as presented by Anderson and Boyer (1978 cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:571), which requires an educational system to use “two languages⁸² as media of instruction, in subjects other than the languages themselves.” Bilingual education is further clarified as follows:

⁸¹ Space limitations do not permit a detailed discussion of this issue. However, for details of the multidimensional approach to the study of bilingualism and bilinguality see Hamers and Blanc (2000). Furthermore, the focus of this investigation is not to provide a detailed linguistic analysis, but rather the focus is on the implementation of educational policy. As a result the linguistic theories and models are used to assist me in my analyses and are not the focus of this investigation.

⁸² In many countries throughout Africa two languages are not supposed to be used but just one. Thus many countries use only one language in the education system and the policies clearly state that one language only should be used, it is only when teachers code-switch into the children’s primary language that two languages are then used. An example of a country with a one-language-only policy is Zambia where English is to be the

[A] definition [of bilingual education] insists on the use of the two languages as media of instruction; it does not include curricula in which a second or foreign language is taught as a subject, with no other use in academic activities, although L2 teaching may be part of a bilingual education program (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:321).

The definitions above have consistently emphasized that bilingual education involves “the use of two” or more languages in the teaching and learning of not only the target language, but also other content subjects themselves. Therefore in this classical sense the education discussed in this study fits with the definition of bilingual education given that it involves the use of, at least, two languages in the teaching and learning of content subjects. However, the type of program that the schools in this study follow will be discussed in detail in chapter 7.

In addition to the various definitions of bilingual education there have been a number of typologies (Romaine, 1995) offered to assist us in understanding bilingual education. These range from Edwards (1985) who considers only two types namely transitional and maintenance to Mackey’s (1972) 90-cell typology, which is based on language use and distributed in space and time in four domains (home, school, environment and nation). In these different descriptions of bilingual education there is some overlap and inconsistency as highlighted by Hornberger (1991) who explains that many of these typologies with a variety of terminologies are often used to account for the same type of educational programs. Developed from the previous typologies Hornberger (1991:223-224) puts forward her own framework for understanding bilingual education in which she distinguishes between bilingual education models and programs.⁸³ For her models refer to goals with respect to language, culture and society (the macro level) and program types relate to characteristics relating to student population, teachers and program structure (the micro level). According to Hamers and Blanc (2000:322) most programs of bilingual education fit into one of three categories:

language of instruction from grade one. However, the government is now reconsidering this, as there are plans to begin initial literacy in the mother tongue with an early transition to English.

⁸³ See section (4.5.1) for a detailed description of bilingual educational models and the subsequent programs under each form as presented by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000).

1. Instruction is given in both languages simultaneously.
2. Instruction is given first in L1 and the pupil is taught until such time as he [*sic*] is able to use L2 as a means of learning.
3. The largest proportion of instruction is given through L2, and L1 is introduced at a later stage, first as a subject and later as a medium of instruction.⁸⁴

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) provides one of the most comprehensive and detailed discussions of the various models of bilingual education, which she divides into three different categories labeled *non-forms*, *weak forms*, and *strong forms*⁸⁵ thus the ideology behind these forms and their outcomes vary accordingly. Under each of these various models she lists different educational program types found within each of these models. She also asks an important question, which is of significance to this study namely: “What kind of ‘bilingualism’ is the goal in ‘bilingual education’ programmes” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:570)? Furthermore, she argues that schools alone are not able to save languages, but they are viewed as important institutions to initiate such a change and the medium of instruction is seen as a key factor in the development of multilingualism and school achievement of learners from dominated groups. I now turn my discussion to the three bilingual educational models described by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000)⁸⁶ and the various programs found within each of these.

4.5.1 *Non-forms, weak forms and strong forms of bilingual education*

First of all, **non-forms** of bilingual education do not fall under the classic term of bilingual education given that they do not use two languages as the medium of instruction. Instead the term ‘bilingual’ is “sheer rhetoric” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:579). It is also argued that these non-forms generally lead to monolingualism in the majority language for both the majority and minority groups found within these programs.

⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that this situation is quite rare and generally involves pilot projects where there is an attempt to revive a dying language (cf Holm & Holm, 1995 regarding the Navajo Language Education project, Huss, 1999 on language revitalization in Northern Scandinavia or Hinton & Hale, 2001 about language revitalization worldwide).

⁸⁵ Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) follows Baker’s (1993) classification of weak and strong forms of bilingual education and she incorporates the non-forms to highlight programs that label themselves as bilingual, but which do not fall within the terms of the classic definition of bilingual education.

⁸⁶ This discussion I present here is a summary of the issues discussed by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000: 570-649) where she presents these various models and programmes under each model and whether or not the goals and outcomes are bilingualism or in the case of some monolingualism.

Here Skutnabb-Kangas gives us examples of three different educational programs that fall under the heading of *non-forms* of bilingual education. The first type of program is known as '*mainstream*' *monolingual with foreign language teaching*. This type of program is found in most countries where the official language is the mother tongue of the linguistic majority. In this type of program the medium of instruction is the mother tongue of the students and in most cases the teacher as well. These students have a foreign language taught to them as a subject only. Skutnabb-Kangas notes that in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, for example, this type of program leads to significant levels of competence in at least one foreign language for the majority of the population. However, she also maintains that the number of inhabitants in these countries is small and that the programs are well organized with adequately trained teachers. These same results are however not achieved in countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. Moreover, the motivation to learn a foreign language may differ between these two groups of countries.

Submersion or *sink-or-swim programs* are another type of educational program, which equally falls under the heading of *non-forms* of bilingual education. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:582) in these types of programs:

Linguistic minority children with a low-status mother tongue are forced to accept instruction through the medium of a foreign majority/official language with high status, in classes where some children are native speakers of the language of instruction, where the teacher does not understand the mother tongue of the minority children, and where the majority language constitutes a threat to the minority children's mother tongue (MT), which runs the risk of being displaced or replaced (MT is not being learned [at a high level]; MT is 'forgotten'; MT does not develop because the children are forbidden to use it or are made to feel ashamed of it) – a **subtractive** language learning situation.

Although this situation resembles the reality of this investigation there are some modifications to this description that are necessary (the changes are in bold italics).

Linguistic **majority** children with a low-status mother tongue are forced to accept instruction through the medium of a foreign majority/official language with high status, in classes where **no** children are native speakers of the language of instruction, where the teacher does understand⁸⁷ the mother tongue of the **majority** children, and where the **dominant/minority** language constitutes a threat to the **majority** children's

⁸⁷ This of course depends on the teacher's background and placement as certain languages are more prominent in some contexts than others (for example, Xhosa is predominant in the Eastern and Western Cape and in the urban areas of the Western Cape it is mostly located in the black townships).

mother tongue (MT), which runs the risk of being displaced or replaced (MT is not being learned [at a high level]; MT is ‘forgotten’; MT does not develop because the children are forbidden to use it or are made to feel ashamed of it) – a **subtractive** language learning situation (Based on Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:582, my modification).

In this definition then the group in question is a linguistic majority in a monolingual classroom with no native speakers of the TL and the teacher also understands the children’s language, as it is also his/her mother tongue. Thus I also question the use of such definitions in a post-colonial context such as South Africa that are based on immigrant minorities and highlight that if such definitions are to be used they then need to be modified to fit the reality of these situations. However, by also placing these programs under the heading of *non-forms* of bilingual education, perhaps Skutnabb-Kangas is also questioning them as types of bilingual education.

Furthermore, this is the most common method currently used for educating minority children, some indigenous and national minority children throughout Western Europe and in Neo-European countries. These programs are also used in the education of many deaf children as well. This is very true in the case of Namibia where no sign language has been developed for deaf children and there are no plans to do so in the near future. It has been noted that in Namibia these children are educated through a method using full communication or oralism⁸⁸ (Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) also gives examples of how such submersion programs are used in many African, Latin-American, Asian, and Pacific countries, which often result in children being made to feel ashamed of their mother tongue (Brock-Utne, 1998, 2000a; Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b; Ngūgĩ, 1987, 1998) and the belief in the superiority of the foreign, often ex-colonial, language of instruction as opposed to their own native language. This is often the case throughout Africa where many children view their language as inferior in comparison to the ex-colonial language(s); often these are also the official language(s). As a result of the negative attitudes towards many of the African languages students opt to choose the ex-colonial language(s) over their own mother tongue (Holmarsdottir, 2000, 2001b). This also has implications for the current study and will be discussed in detail in chapter 7.

⁸⁸ Fieldwork that I conducted in Namibia in 2000, in connection with my M.Phil thesis, showed that this is the only form of education available for this group. Thus they are in a sink-or-swim situation where they are forced to learn in the dominant language.

Segregation programs also fall under the *non-form* heading and are described as programs where:

“Linguistic minority children with a low-status mother tongue are forced to accept instruction through the medium of their own mother tongue in classes with minority children (with the same mother tongue) only, where the teacher may be monolingual or bilingual but often poorly trained, where the class/school has poorer facilities and fewer resources than classes/schools for dominant group children, and where teaching of the dominant language as a second/foreign language is poor or non-existent” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:591).

The educational programs instituted by the apartheid regime in South Africa and Namibia were characteristic of segregation programs as described above (Mbamba, 1982; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Although the apartheid programs did not provide equal educational opportunities to all the various linguistic groups found within their borders the programs did at least provide, to some degree, the opportunity for these children to have their mother tongue as the language of instruction. In the case of Namibia there were also language boards during the apartheid era, whose overall responsibility was to plan and develop the Namibian languages, something that is currently lacking in Namibia.⁸⁹ However, it is important to keep in mind that the overall purpose of these language boards was to separate the languages rather than to harmonize them. In South Africa as well there existed language boards during the apartheid era, but they were also scrapped when PANSALB was formed. However, PANSALB has developed new entities known as language bodies.

The second model of bilingual education described by Skutnabb-Kangas is known as **weak forms**, which also have a goal of monolingualism or a strong dominance in only one of the languages, usually the majority language. Additionally these forms may have limited bilingualism as their goal as opposed to multilingualism and multiliteracy. It is also argued that in the classic understanding some of these programs do fall under the bilingual education category given that they use two languages as media of instruction.

Under the heading of weak forms two types of bilingual programs are described, both of which are known as transitional. These programs are described as “a more sophisticated

⁸⁹ During interviews that I previously conducted in Namibia it was discovered that after independence the language boards, which existed during the apartheid era, were adjourned and there is currently interest in the country in producing a language body similar to South Africa’s PANSALB. However, the job of these language boards was to separate the languages and not to harmonize them (cf 3.3 and 3.4).

version of submersion programs” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:592). In both early-exit and late-exit programs (cf Box 4.2 for a definition of these programs) the ultimate goal is assimilation and a strong dominance in the majority language at the expense of the mother tongue.

Definition Box 4.2: Transitional early-exit and late-exit bilingual programs

A **transitional** program is a program where linguistic minority children with a low-status mother tongue are initially instructed through the medium of their mother tongue for a few years and where their mother tongue is taught as though it has no intrinsic value, only an instrumental value. It is used only in order for the children to learn the majority language better, and so as to give them some subject matter (content) knowledge while they are learning the majority language. In **early-exit** programs, children are transferred to a majority language medium program as soon as they can function to some extent in the majority language orally, in most cases after 1 or 2, at the most 3, years. In **late-exit** programs they may continue to have at least some of their education, sometimes up to half of it, in L1 up to the 5th or 6th grade, and sometimes the mother tongue may be taught as a subject even after that.

(Source Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:593)

The difference between the two programs is after how many years the learners switch from the mother tongue to the majority language as the language of instruction. Skutnabb-Kangas argues that throughout “Anglophone” Africa, Latin America, and parts of India the early-exit model is generally used and that late-exit programs are still uncommon.⁹⁰ It is also obvious that the late-exit programs are better than the early-exit ones given that they allow the learner a better opportunity to become more proficient – especially in literacy and content – in their mother tongue by providing a greater foundation before making the transition to another language.

Finally, **strong forms** of bilingual education are highly recommended given that their goal is “to promote (high levels of) multilingualism (or, minimally, bilingualism) and multiliteracy for **all** participants in the programme, regardless of whether they represent linguistic minorities or majorities” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:580). This is achieved through either a language maintenance or language shelter program, of which Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:601) gives the following example:

⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that in the two countries involved in the overall study, which my thesis forms part of, Tanzania and South Africa different exit models are practiced. Tanzanian practices a late-exit model while the model practiced currently in South Africa is early-exit (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2002).

For a few national minorities, maintenance programmes are self-evident, 'normal' way of educating their children, a natural human right – many of them never think of the fact that they are in a maintenance programme...the Swedish-speakers in Finland, Afrikaans- and English-speakers in South Africa, or Russian-speakers in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, are either former power minorities and/or are in transitional phase where they have to accept the fact that they no longer have the power to organize their own children's education through the medium of their own language.

A comparison of the segregation and maintenance programs⁹¹ (the latter is defined as a strong form of bilingual education) is made by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:592) on the basis that they can often resemble one another. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:601) defines a maintenance or language shelter program as follows:

...a programme where linguistic minority children (often with a low-status mother tongue) voluntarily choose (among existing alternatives) to be instructed through the medium of their own mother tongue, in classes with minority children with the same mother tongue only, where the teacher is bilingual (almost always in the case of immigrant and refugee minorities and indigenous peoples; not always (but often) to the same extent in the case of national minorities) and when they get good teaching in the majority languages as a second/foreign language, also given by a bilingual teacher.

For Skutnabb-Kangas a comparison of segregation and maintenance programs is necessary in order that the arguments used in favor of or against such programs are based on correct information as opposed to misinformation.

- existence of alternative programs (no for segregation programs, yes for maintenance programs);
- well-trained teachers (segregation programs usually do not have them, maintenance ones usually do);
- culturally appropriate materials (segregation programs often do not have these; materials are either racist, as in South Africa or they are imported from the country of origin and do not describe the children's reality [the role of donors in educational aid to Africa often influences the language used in educational materials; for examples of this see Brock-Utne, 2000a; Holmarsdottir, 2000]. Maintenance programs often produce their own materials);
- negative (segregation) or positive (maintenance) learner-related affective factors, in relation to anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, teacher expectations, etc.;
- good subject matter teaching, also in both languages (not usual in segregation, often present in maintenance);
- opportunity for practicing L2 in peer group contexts outside school (in segregation usually prevented by racism or lack of L2 peers or not enough knowledge of L2, while this is often organized in the early years in maintenance, often through cooperation agreements etc.) (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:592).

⁹¹ Further details can be found in Skutnabb-Kangas (1990).

In the South African situation (and Africa in general) this last point highlighting the difference between segregation and maintenance programs is one area where opportunities could be organized for practicing the additional language in a peer group context as the children in many of the black townships generally do not receive such opportunities and thus still find themselves in a situation resembling a segregation program. Skutnabb-Kangas argues that policy-makers who are against the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in maintenance programs, generally base their arguments on factors relating to segregation rather than maintenance. Furthermore, many of these policy-makers may simply be unaware of the differences between the two types of programs. However, political unwillingness to institute such programs may “lie elsewhere” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:592) and might include such factors as economics (Bialystok, 2001; Romaine, 1995) or pressure from donor agencies (Brock-Utne, 2000a).

Thus for comparison it is important to discuss the three different forms of bilingual education mainly due to the enormous misunderstanding about the program types. Here Skutnabb-Kangas refers to Merrill Swain’s frequent emphasis that the immersion bilingual education model found in Canada cannot be or should not be used to describe the submersion programs located in the USA (cf Swain & Johnson, 1997:12). In the post-colonial era Swain and Johnson (1997:5) argue that “in many contexts, the target proficiency of the majority of L2 medium programs where the colonial language has been retained remains essentially replacive since support for the L1 educational development is often minimal or nonexistent”. Thus for these researchers bilingual education in these contexts often does not meet the additive bilingual requirements that are necessary to define them as immersion programs. Furthermore, it is stated, “late-exit transitional programmes are often called maintenance programmes. Or two-way programmes are called ‘two-way immersion’ or ‘dual immersion’ (cf definition box 4.3 below), even if they only imply immersion for the participating majority group children but not for the minorities” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:580).

Definition Box 4.3: Two-way bilingual (dual language) bilingual programs

Two-way bilingual (dual language) (also called ‘dual immersion’ in the USA) models are models with approximately 50% majority students and 50% minority students (with the same mother tongue) who voluntarily choose to be instructed by a ‘completely’ bilingual teacher, initially mainly through the medium of a minority language (the 50%-50% model), with the dominant language taught as a subject (at the beginning separately to both groups: mother tongue English to native English-speakers and English as a second language to minority language speakers in the USA). The percentage of instruction in the dominant language increases in all 90-10% models, in some to 40-50% or even 60% by grade 6, whereas it stays the same in the 50-50% model (something that actually would place them in the transitional models category). Two-way models thus combine in one classroom a maintenance model for minorities (especially in the 90-10% model) and immersion model for the majority while maximizing peer-group contact in the other language for both groups.

(Source Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:618)

In actual practice it is argued that the situations vary according to each country and there are often “different options available for different kinds of children, depending on a variety of circumstances, which vary from place to place...[Furthermore], the types of programs offered to particular groups depend very much on the relationship between them and the government” (Romaine, 1995:246). Additionally, it is argued that power relations within society also affect the options available to different groups within the society.

In multilingual communities many people have to learn two languages (or more), often those speaking a minority language (the situation for many immigrant language groups) or in the case of South Africa the speakers of African languages are particularly obliged to acquire the majority language (or often an ex-colonial language). In South Africa it is the language of prestige and power that the speakers of African languages are required to learn which generally means English and/or Afrikaans. The members of these language groups – both immigrants and speakers of African languages – are often required to attain a certain degree of bilingualism if they wish to participate in the mainstream society. Whether this additional language is acquired in the formal sense through bilingual education or whether informally there are a number of issues that need to be discussed.

4.6 Language acquisition

As children learn their first language, they gradually incorporate an expanding knowledge of the world into their continually widening vocabulary a system of words and meanings, concepts and symbols, that defines their intelligence. Development entails learning both concepts to structure the world and words to label and express those structures (Bialystok, 2001:188-89).

This description highlights the process that children go through when acquiring a first language (L1). According to Hamers and Blanc (2000:17) linguistic and psychological approaches to language acquisition “differ in the emphasis they put onto and the relative importance they attribute to each of these aspects”. Thus some researchers put an emphasis on the role that mental algorithms play in language acquisition over the role of i.e. parental input (Pinker, 1984:28-29) while others place priority on cognitive prerequisites that set the stage for linguistic development (Clark, 1993). Bialystok (2001) contends that there are two major competing theoretical approaches to language acquisition, one formal, and the other functional. She also illustrates the difficult job language acquisition theorists have in developing appropriate theories:

The patterns of development may be consistent, but the mechanisms responsible for that development are far from apparent. Children come to language learning as biological beings with distinctively human brains, interacting in a social context, and receiving massive linguistic input. Surely, all these features contribute to language acquisition, although identifying these as necessary ingredients does little to explain how that happens. It is incumbent upon a theory of language acquisition to identify the mechanisms by which these forces combine so that language acquisition is guaranteed and linguistic competence is ultimately a part of children’s cognitive repertoire (Bialystok, 2001:31-32).

It has also been asserted that in a comprehensive theory of language acquisition the following aspects should be taken into account (Pinker, 1984): the state of the child at the onset of acquisition; the linguistic input and its context; the mental algorithms that turn this input into knowledge about the language; the end state of the process, i.e. a grammatically competent speaker, and the evolution of the process, i.e. what children understand and produce during the acquisition process.

Although the focus of this research is not to develop theories of language acquisition it is believed important that the aspects mentioned by Pinker (1984) are taken into account when looking into the teaching and learning of additional language(s) and namely the transition

from mother tongue to English in the context of this study. It is also important to note that in this research emphasis will be placed more on the social and linguistic aspects related to language acquisition rather than the psychological factors, although it is acknowledged that all these aspects are important in developing a comprehensive theory of language acquisition both for the L1 and L2/additional language.

Additionally, some researchers maintain that social-psychological factors are most important when dealing with minority language groups (Appel & Muysken, 1987) and the attitudes of the second-language learner can play a major role in language acquisition. The learners' attitudes toward the target language⁹² (TL) community are believed to affect success. Thus students who wish to become members of the TL community (integrative motivation) learn the TL better than those with an instrumental motivation i.e. those who only want to learn the language for commercial, educational or other instrumental reasons (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). However, Appel and Muysken (1987:94) are also critical of the relationship between social and psychological factors stating that this relationship "should not be over-stressed" and that these variables "must not be seen as expressing individual characteristics of the learner, but as indicators of the social, psychological and cultural distance between the learner and the target-language community" which is the elite in most African contexts, and a minority. Furthermore, the norm in most countries of the world is not monolingualism, as suggested by the use of the term target language, but multilingualism. The complex multilingual configurations of the nations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe, for example, are commonplace. Given the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of today's language learners, the goal of additional language learning can no longer be merely to get to know the (monolingual) native speaker and learn the (monolingual) target language. Additional language learning⁹³ today should allow students to approach language learning that

⁹² A target language refers to the language that is the aim of the educational program. Thus when I moved to Norway my aim was to learn Norwegian, as a fourth language; therefore, for me at the time Norwegian was the target language.

⁹³ From this point I will use the term additional language that refers to second language or L2, as I feel this term is better suited for use in this study. As previously mentioned in Africa and many other post-colonial societies it is not uncommon for children to already be proficient in, or familiar with, two languages when they enter school and thus the learning of, for example, English may not necessarily be as a second language, but an additional language (cf Brock-Utne, 2002a for the Tanzanian context). Furthermore, when discussing the issue of additional language learning the term foreign language is also used in the literature, but this generally refers to programs in which the study of an additional language such as English in Norway or Iceland and where the language is not used to a large extent as the medium of instruction (Crandall, 1997). The term foreign language learning, on the other hand, is generally not used when referring to the learning of additional languages for students in many post-colonial settings where the language is not only being taught, but where that language is also used as a medium of instruction. Additionally, I occasionally use the term foreign language in the context of South Africa

takes them beyond the monolingual to the multilingual, thus beyond native speaker competence to multi-competence. Furthermore, the term target language is not my term, but a term used by many researchers. My use of the term in this dissertation does reflect the monolingual mentality of assimilation, but it does reflect the reality that the students in this investigation find themselves where English is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 onwards and thus works like a target language to some degree.

Furthermore, it is argued that individuals differ considerably in their additional language acquisition and that there are many factors that can influence the rate of second-language development such as intelligence, age, and language aptitude (Appel & Muysken, 1987; Bialystok, 2001; Hamers & Blanc, 2000). The prevailing view about additional language learning, which is that children are able to acquire an additional language better than adults, can very often influence decisions about when children need to start learning another language. On this note I now focus my discussion on the age of acquisition.

4.6.1 Does earlier equal better?

The question of whether the age at which individuals begin to be exposed to a second/foreign language (henceforth L2) plays a role in L2 development has long been a theme of discussion amongst researchers, educators, [parents] and indeed learners. The reasons for this interest in the age issue relate not only to theoretical issues such as whether a putative innate language faculty continues to function beyond a particular maturational point, but also to very practical issues such as when L2 instruction should begin in school..." (Singelton, 1997:43).

Many researchers have argued that it is relatively easier for children to learn language forms (pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical usage), while adults often have difficulty with these same tasks (cf Penfield & Roberts, 1959:240; Lenneberg, 1967:176). Consequently, there is some disagreement regarding the question of when it is best for children to start learning a second language, although some researchers argue that early childhood is better than any teaching method, particularly for native-like pronunciation (Edwards, 1994b:63 for a

to highlight the fact that English is not commonly used in the communities in this study and thus I see this language as foreign in the context of these communities. In many ways English is a foreign language in South Africa (in the townships and many rural communities) and theories of foreign language learning are more applicable than theories of second language acquisition. In South Africa there are also a number of researchers who have agreed with my point and have confirmed that English is as foreign as Greek or Spanish are in many parts of Canada (Lambert, 1990) (cf 4.6.2 for this discussion in detail).

detailed discussion of this debate cf Singleton, 1997). While others argue that such thinking is one of the key tenets of ESL/EFL, which has been shown to be scientifically false (Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:575) argues that the belief that the “earlier English is introduced, the better the results” is better referred to as the ‘early start’ fallacy, which is just one of five fallacies regarding the teaching of English worldwide (cf Phillipson, 1992 chapter 6 for a detailed analysis of these fallacies). In addition the ‘early start’ fallacy is closely connected to the ‘subtractive’ fallacy which is based on the idea that “if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:575).

Moreover, some researchers (Lenneberg, 1967) argue that there is a sensitive (critical) period⁹⁴ for language learning – a period during which children are especially sensitized to linguistic input, a period before which and after which language learning is considerably more difficult and ultimate success is not guaranteed. However, as Singleton (1997:44) points out Lenneberg “offered no evidence of any kind in respect of his claims regarding post-pubertal L2 learning, relying instead simply on an implicit appeal to popular assumptions”. It is precisely these assumptions made by policy-makers, educators and parents, which have affected policies and had an impact on policy decisions concerning additional language acquisition in which the belief is that “ [the] younger = better in the long run” (Singleton, 1997:45). The reason why young children seem to learn languages quicker than adults may be the amount of time they spend just hearing, learning and practicing the language provided they are in an environment where they hear the language around them all day.

Bialystok (2001) has carried out a comprehensive analysis involving a number of studies dealing with the critical period issues. For example, a review by Long (1990) claims that there is a critical period for the acquisition of language and that the source of the critical period can be traced to one (or more) of four domains: social, input, cognitive, and neurological factors. Although the review by Long is seen as one of the most comprehensive Bialystok questions the interpretation of those factors arguing that:

⁹⁴ Lenneberg’s argument suggests that language acquisition is constrained by a “critical period” beginning at age two and ending roughly at puberty (Lenneberg, 1967:176).

“Critical period” is a technical concept and, as such, carries specific criteria. A correlation between age of learning and ultimate success is not, *prima facie*, evidence for critical period. As the term is normally used in studies of behavioral development in various species...the relation between age and performance must be bound by necessity and causality (Bialystok, 2001:74)

As a result she argues that only Long’s neurological factor satisfies this criterion and that the effects of the other three variables, mentioned by Long, can be modified by experience and circumstances. Furthermore, Bialystok asserts that it is an inescapable conclusion that general cognitive processes are a central factor in language acquisition. However, it is also argued that not only adults, but children as well must resort to the use of various learning strategies in acquiring an additional language. This suggests then:

All of this casts a large measure of variability, even uncertainty, into the language learning enterprise. It means that some people will flourish more in their language acquisition experience, some situations will nurture language learning better than others, and some combinations of languages will be more felicitous in promoting high levels of bilingual proficiency (Bialystok, 2001:88-89).

Thus the belief that only the neurological factors central in the critical period hypothesis are responsible for language acquisition is debatable. Rather these factors work in combination with others such as social and linguistic in the acquisition of additional languages.

Although not directly relevant to the critical period discussion, the order of language acquisition, which is often influenced by the younger = better belief, needs to be touched upon briefly. Romaine (1995) argues that:

There are a number of possible routes involved in bilingual acquisition: for example, children may acquire more than one language more or less simultaneously, or they may acquire one of the languages before the other, i.e. consecutively or successively. (Romaine, 1995:181).

Thus order of language acquisition such as *consecutive* –if the languages are learned one after the other (Mackey, 1987) or *simultaneous* – if the languages are learned more or less at the same time has primarily been researched in the field of SLA, which has focused its attention on studying the acquisition of a second language, particularly, in later childhood and adulthood (Romaine, 1995). A relevant concern may also be then to what extent the children risk becoming “semilinguals” if they start learning a second language “too early”, in the case

of consecutive bilingualism. The term *semilingualism* refers to a lack of fluency in both of the languages a person speaks. Edwards (1994b:58) writes that in the 1960s and 1970s some researchers began relating the older notion of semi-bilingualism to the context of ethnic minority-group speakers and extended it “from a solely linguistic description to a catchword with political and ideological overtones relating majorities and minorities, domination and subordination, oppression and victimization”. Skutnabb-Kangas has dropped the concept of semilingualism.⁹⁵ Furthermore, both Skutnabb-Kangas (1984) and Cummins (2000) assert that the term actually forms part of an argument about power and oppression in relation to language in education. In this respect it has served its purpose, namely to highlight the inequalities that exist regarding language in education and to begin a discussion about practical measure that could be put into place to correct these inequalities (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Additionally, other researchers (Edelsky et al., 1983) have maintained that the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)⁹⁶ distinction and the threshold hypothesis⁹⁷ based on the work by Cummins (1976, 1980, 1984) are identical to the “semilingualism thesis which they interpret as arguing that bilingual students fail academically because they have low proficiency in both languages” (Cummins, 2000:99). Although, Cummins (2000) admits that while the “semilingualism”

⁹⁵ Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) maintains that the term semilingualism is more a political slogan than a scientific term (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). She also asserts that the duty of the slogan was to start a discussion about practical measures. Finally both Cummins (cf a detailed response to the critics of this term in Cummins, 2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) both reject the critique made by some researchers (cf Edelsky, Hudelson, Flores, Barkin, Altweger & Jilbert, 1983; Romaine, 1995) that the term semilingualism is a “deficiency theory”, a highly criticized attitude that judges the language of socially weaker subjects as “deficient”.

⁹⁶ The distinction between BICS and CALP is described in the following way: “native-speakers of any language come to school at age five or so virtually fully competent users of their language. They have acquired the core grammar of their language and many of the sociolinguistic rules for using it appropriately in familiar social contexts. Yet, schools spend another 12 years (and considerable public funds) attempting to extend this basic linguistic repertoire into more specialized domains and functions of language. CALP or academic language proficiency is what schools focus on in this endeavor” (Cummins, 2000:59). Thus BICS refers to surface fluency, which is not cognitively demanding and CALP to cognitive linguistic competence, which is closely related to the development of literacy skills.

⁹⁷ In the late 1970s, following Lambert’s (1977) distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism, Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) and Cummins (1976, 1979) developed the threshold hypothesis. The threshold hypothesis suggests that the levels of proficiency that bilingual students attain in their two languages might mediate the consequences of their bilingualism for cognitive and academic development (cf Cummins, 1976, 1978 and 1979 for a detailed discussion of this). Specifically, there may be a threshold level of proficiency in both languages which students must attain in order to avoid any negative academic consequences. In simple terms (as noted in Cummins, 2000) students whose academic proficiency in the language of instruction is relatively weak will tend to fall further behind unless the instruction they receive enables them to comprehend the input (both written and oral) and participate academically in class. Those students whose academic proficiency in the language of instruction is more strongly developed are less vulnerable to inappropriate instruction (for example, English submersion programs).

construct has no theoretical value in explaining the poor academic performance of some bilingual students, the CALP that bilingual students develop is relevant to their academic progress. Notably Cummins argues that:

...there is overwhelming evidence that for both monolingual and bilingual students, the degree of academic language proficiency they develop in school is a crucial intervening variable in mediating their academic progress. The vast majority of those who have argued that 'semilingualism does not exist' have failed to realize that theoretical constructs are not characterized by existences or non-existence but by characteristics such as validity and usefulness, or their opposites. Most have declined to engage with the question of how language proficiency is related to academic achievement and how individual differences in academic proficiency should be characterized. In short, their critiques of the construct of 'semilingualism' have failed to contribute much to our understanding of the underlying issues (Cummins, 2000:99).

According to Cummins he used the term 'semilingualism' to describe the reality that the lack of L1 instruction or L2 submersion model results in the inability of bilingual students to gain sufficient access to the linguistic proficiencies and functions required for effective participation in school.⁹⁸ Moreover, Cummins (2000:100) asserts that:

When schools deny bilingual students opportunities to access literacy and comprehensible academic language in both L1 and L2 (as they have historically done in many countries), students are denied the cognitive and linguistic benefits of additive bilingualism and frequently they tend to fall progressively further behind grade expectations in their functional command of academic registers.

An example of the situation described here by Cummins is obvious in the description of the Threshold Project conducted in South Africa in which Macdonald (1990:161-162) contends:

Qualitative data from many testing and observational contexts indicates that the Std 3 year [Grade 5] is a time of trauma for both teacher and child. The children cannot cope with the sudden ("deep end") launch into a massive range of new vocabulary, structures and concepts...the vocabulary requirements in English increase by 1 000% from Std 2 [Grade 4] to Std 3 (from perhaps 800 words to approximately 7 000)...the current generation of children are developing very few of the English skills which are

⁹⁸ I find this thinking by Cummins similar to the work by Bourdieu (1991) who argues that different speakers possess different quantities of *linguistic capital* – the capacity to produce appropriate products at the right time and at the right place. Furthermore, the distribution of linguistic capital is closely related to the distribution of other kinds of capital and the configuration of these different assets govern the positioning of a person in the social world. For example, the members of a majority will have a dominant position in relation to a minority member, if the minority member speaks the dominant language with a foreign accent, has inappropriate vocabulary, is unsure in expressing him/herself or is limited in his/her linguistic repertoire in various ways. However, this is not the case in developing countries since the majority population is generally put in a position of having to acquire the linguistic capital of the dominant minority population (Brock-Utne, 1998).

required for the challenge of the medium transfer in Std 3 – at least to Std 3 as it is currently conceived, with the unprepared – for advent of the formal learning of content subjects in English.

Moreover, Macdonald (1990) highlights the effects of subtractive bilingualism as a result of the sudden change over from the students first to a second-language medium of instruction noting that pupils could not explain in English what they already knew in their first language nor could they transfer into their first language the new knowledge that they had learnt through English.

As a result of this discussion we can see then how the ‘semilingual’ construct was then used to form part of an argument about power and oppression as previously noted. I believe what Cummins is proposing here is intended to generate a critical dialogue along with an activist collaboration in order to redress the inequalities found in schools. Ultimately the goal is to reduce discrimination and promote learning opportunities for those students who have been excluded and silenced in schools. In keeping with the issue of power I now debate the terminology used when discussing the acquisition of an additional language.

4.6.2 Foreign language learning versus second language acquisition

The vocabulary we [researchers] use to express our ideas is more than just a reference system. Words have power, and when words come into favor, they can take on a life of their own. Words can then *determine* our ideas, because they focus our attention on certain concepts at the expense of others and invoke assumptions that may never be made explicit. If words are successful, they can spread across contiguous interest groups, entering the consciousness of what is eventually a widely dispersed research community. Just as language changes as it spreads to different cultures and different places, so too technical language changes as it is embraced by researchers occupied with different kinds of questions (Bialystok, 2001:121).

I use this quote in support of my own argument that the terms used to deal with the issue of language in education with reference to minority groups in post-colonial contexts need to be critically examined. In this section I compare the terms second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language learning (FLL) and how they have been used in the literature. I also look at the contexts associated with each term. Furthermore, I present the debate among researchers in defining these terms. As a result, I hope to better understand how these

constructs may be used in dealing with the issue of language in education in post-colonial contexts (or even new terminology developed to deal with these contexts).

In this study an important distinction that needs to be made is between FLL and SLA. In FLL students study an additional language such as English, which is taught as a foreign language in schools, but it is not used as a medium of instruction. On the other hand, English is used as the medium of instruction in the previously mentioned “outer circle” countries, which is taught not only as an additional⁹⁹ language, but is simultaneously used across the curriculum often as early as Grade Three of primary school and in some cases even from grade one. Therefore the focus in this thesis is on the latter group, that is those children who are not only learning a second or additional language, but who also have to have this language as a medium of instruction. Furthermore, this makes it difficult to differentiate between *language-for-learning* and *language-learning* as these students find themselves in both situations simultaneously.

Håkon Ringbom (1987:26) declares that in the field of applied linguistics the “term Second Language Acquisition (SLA) generally occurs more frequently than Foreign Language Learning (FLL)”. In order to substantiate this argument I reviewed the recent abstracts publication of the Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée (AILA) from the 13th World Congress of Applied Linguistics held in Singapore in 2002. In the publication I looked up both SLA and FLL in the key word index and discovered that under the heading SLA there were 13 papers listed while FLL had only 7. In addition, L2 acquisition, which is often used as a substitute for SLA, had 27 entries. Thus bringing the total number to 40 papers on second language acquisition as opposed to only 7 dealing with foreign language learning.

After reviewing the abstracts of the papers listed under L2 acquisition I discovered that they dealt with a number of issues ranging from non-native speakers, generally immigrants, learning/acquiring the target language of the host country, to studies that highlighted

⁹⁹ I have mentioned here additional language specifically because in many countries, and this is quite common throughout Africa, people speak several related languages and thus i.e. the ex-colonial languages are not always taught as second languages, but may be a student’s third or fourth language. I recall a colleague of mine from Somalia who spoke five languages, with English as the fifth. As previously stated (cf footnote 93) additional language refers then to second language or L2. This is then also in line with the literature in reference to the way the terms bilingualism and multilingualism are used interchangeably in which multilingualism includes bilingualism and in some instances bilingualism may actually refer to multilingualism although not always specified (here I build on the argument presented in 4.4.1 and supported by that of Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000 and Romaine, 1995).

second/foreign language¹⁰⁰ learning referring to i.e. Americans learning Russian in the US or Japanese learning English in Japan. In general, papers listed under FLL focused on language groups learning English in their own country as a foreign language, with the exception of a study looking into Dutch students in Belgium learning French. SLA, on the other hand, dealt mostly with ESL or EFL¹⁰¹ learners and only one paper dealt with learners of Japanese as an L2. From this brief analysis it can be said that SLA generally occurs more frequently in the literature, as argued by Ringbom, and it very often refers to students learning English in various contexts (immigrants in English speaking countries learning English). FLL, found less often in the literature, refers to students commonly learning English and other high status languages in their own country and where these languages are truly viewed as foreign languages. Essentially, FLL refers to what takes place in more highly industrialized countries and often refers to language learning by the mainstream population, where SLA refers to i.e. immigrant minorities in these countries or learners of English (or other high status languages) in various contexts. Perhaps one could go as far as to say that second language learning SLL is often used to refer to L2 teaching for the poor and the FLL is for the rich.¹⁰²

Furthermore, Ringbom states that the term ‘second language acquisition’ has been used in two different ways. “One use denotes the process of learning another language without the guidance from teaching or books, in an environment where the language is frequently spoken. The other use is as a blanket term to cover not only second language acquisition proper but L2-learning in classroom situations as well” (Ringbom, 1987:26). Ellis (1994) makes the distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘educational’ settings in second language acquisition. In the first situation learners of the target language come into contact with other native speakers of the L2 in a variety of settings including at home, in the workplace, etc. as opposed to those

¹⁰⁰ In these two papers mentioned the terminology used was unclear. The authors referred to second/foreign language as opposed to using either second or foreign. This is interesting given that in both countries (Japan and the US) the languages being learned (English and Russian) could be described as ‘foreign’ in these contexts, but the authors chose to use second/foreign and it leads one to believe that they themselves are unsure in their use of the terminology.

¹⁰¹ English second language (ESL) and English foreign language (EFL) learners.

¹⁰² The terms we as researchers use may also constrain the range of linguistic possibilities of various language groups. In addition researchers exert power by using such labels and an important issue that needs to be considered is that of reflexivity, which is central in critical studies. Other researchers also argue that labels may be misused. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:645) highlights that concepts such as being “bilingual” can of course also be misused. In the USA “it sometimes has negative connotations...it is used about minority children in the phase where they are still in the early phases of learning the dominant language”. Yet, we generally do not find this same concept (bilingualism) applied to dominant language groups learning a dominant language in an FLL context. This very fact builds on some of the theoretical foundation for the project of which my thesis forms a part.

who come into contact with the language in educational settings only (Ellis, 1994). On the other hand, Spolsky (1988) simply maintains that *L2 learning* refers to the learning of another language once a first language (L1) has been learned.

In discussing the distinction between FLL and SLA Lambert¹⁰³ made the following statement: “When asked to write a substantial paper around this title,¹⁰⁴ I was at first perplexed because I had blurred any distinctions between a “foreign” and a “second” language and used the terms interchangeably” (Lambert, 1990:introduction). Lambert’s line of reasoning continues as follows:

In research on bilingualism, the major issue for me has been which language is acquired first and which second. Relative to the “native language” or the “mother tongue,” any language, whether it is a “foreign” or a “second,” comes second, except for the fascinating cases in which two languages are acquired simultaneously in infancy. Working in Canada also contributes to a simplification of the distinction between the terms. In Canada there are two official national languages, and either French or English can be a first language for large numbers of Canadians. Learning the other national language would make either one of them the “second” language, even though in certain parts of the country either one could be as “foreign” a language as Spanish or Greek would be. The distinction begins to emerge when one thinks of the United States, where English is the only national language and where, in oversimplified terms, if English isn’t a person’s home language then he/she is expected to make it his/her “second” language, whereas if English is the home language, any other language one might learn is “foreign” (Lambert, 1990:introduction).

Of particular interest and relevance to this study is Lambert’s argument that either French or English could be seen as a foreign language in certain parts of Canada just as Spanish or Greek. The fact remains that not only in the urban townships, where this research is located, but also in many other parts of South Africa, English could be identified as a foreign language since it is seldom heard or used outside of the classroom setting.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, it should be noted that my focus in this study is on English as an additional language given that the promotion and use of the home language alongside an additional language in the LiEP means English for most students (particularly African language speakers). However, it is acknowledged that English is not the only possible L2 in South Africa and that Afrikaans

¹⁰³ Lambert made this statement when asked to write a paper about SLA and FLL for the First Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues in 1990.

¹⁰⁴ The paper was entitled *Issues in Foreign Language and Second Language Education*.

¹⁰⁵ See also Brock-Utne (2000a, 2002a) for the Tanzanian context when English is seldom heard or used outside of the classroom setting.

might be another option. I have, however, made the decision to limit my focus on English only because looking at Afrikaans as well would entail a more comprehensive discussion and would entail the inclusion of more schools which would increase the length of the dissertation considerably.

In his paper Lambert also brings out a number of distinctions between these two terms¹⁰⁶ and relates the differences to the ways in which foreign languages (FLs) and second languages (SLs) are supplied and taught by schools to the learners who in turn become the potential users of the target language. It is also suggested that apart from the general feature that SL and FL pedagogy focus on the teaching and learning of an additional language, different than the learner's mother tongue, they are fundamentally diverse. Phillipson (1991) suggests that context plays a major role and we should consider the fact that those working with ESL (often the focus of SLA research) in, for example, North America or Kenya are in completely different positions. In the former learners are exposed to native speakers of the language and in the latter there are a limited number of non-native speakers of the target language and that the functional range of the language is more restricted (Phillipson, 1991). Furthermore, even the teachers are not comfortably competent speakers of the additional language and it has been argued that in South Africa the current level of English language proficiency of the majority of teachers in the black schools is entirely inadequate for effective teaching and learning to occur (Macdonald, 1990). Thus "teachers find it difficult to explain concepts effectively through the medium of English...and many of the junior primary teachers have a poor command of English *per se* and therefore find it difficult to teach it effectively even as a subject" (Macdonald, 1990:162) not to mention having to use it across the curriculum.

Nevertheless, in the field of language pedagogy there is no consensus on what the essential differences between FLL and SLA are. This is also highlighted in the diversity of the papers presented at the AILA conference under each of the headings (cf my previous discussion). An overview provided by Freed (1990) basically argues that the similarities between FL and SL learning/acquisition outweigh the differences. Similarly, Gass (1990) and Kramsch (1990) are of the opinion that the learning of non-primary languages is a common field of enquiry that encompasses both SL and FL approaches. VanPatten (1990) contends that the FL profession has not investigated the range of problems that have been the focus in SLA. The conclusion

¹⁰⁶ He refers to them as FL (foreign language) and SL (second language).

reached by Lambert (1990) suggests that foreign language and second language professionals have substantially different aims, orientations, and preparatory training and their offerings are directed to different populations of users.

Others see the SL form as more inclusive. Thus, Ellis (1985) designates FL learning as one form of SL learning. Hamers and Blanc (2000:373) characterize foreign language as a “second and subsequently learned language(s) (L2) which are not widely used by the speech community in which the learners live”. Furthermore, it has been stated that “learning a foreign language is learning a language different from the mother tongue in a setting where no speakers or communities speaking that language are present¹⁰⁷...Learning an L2 is learning a language which is also spoken by speech communities with whom interethnic contacts are present around the learner” (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:366n). Yet, one may question what is meant by interethnic contact being present around the learner, which is something that Phillipson (1991) does when he looks at the different contexts in relation to the learning of English. To highlight the difficulty many second language researchers face in using the terminology VanPatten (1990) comments on the following statement by Ellis (1985:5 emphasis original):

Second language acquisition is not meant to contrast with *foreign* language acquisition. SLA is used as a general term...It is, however, an open question whether the way in which acquisition proceeds in these different situations is the same or different.

VanPatten’s argument is as follows:

I find this citation somewhat ambivalent and believe it reflects a schizophrenic nature which is not particular to Ellis but to many second language (L2) professionals. On the one hand, we would like to use one term to cover all language acquisition situations. Yet, at the same time, we feel the need cautiously to qualify our term because we have not provided adequate evidence that one term can really be used for all acquisitional environments (VanPatten, 1990:17).

Phillipson (1991) argues that despite the fact that researchers may have selected their labels with care it does not guarantee that their use is unproblematic, as noted by VanPatten. Moreover, VanPatten (1990) argues that SLA refers to language acquisition in a native-speaking environment whereas FLL is in a non-native environment. This is exactly where the

¹⁰⁷ This can be said to fit the situation in Africa where learners are learning i.e. English as an additional language in the context described here as foreign language learning.

difficulty in this investigation is situated, the context of language learning. Since there are differences in learning, for example, English in different contexts (both inside and outside of the classroom) SLA studies in these contexts should reflect this or more appropriate labels should be found (Phillipson, 1991).

In some contexts there may be a need in academic and political discourse to re-label a second language as a foreign one. The director of the Organization for African Unity's Bureau of Inter-African Languages chooses to label English and French as *foreign* languages (Mateene, 1985) when seeking to underline their historical imposition and alien nature. This is a conscious strategy for attempting to curb the dominance of the former colonial languages and create more positive conditions for the growth and spread of African languages. This involves rejecting the ESL label (Phillipson, 1991:44).

Thus by using the term 'foreign language' in this study I not only challenge the hegemony of English, but simultaneously challenge the use of terms such as SLA in the South African context. We could even argue that there are more native speakers of English in South Africa than in most African countries, but that the majority of black learners have almost no contact with these native English speakers due to the consequences of apartheid. In the project I follow Phillipson's argument that perhaps more appropriate labels need to be developed that better reflect the differences both inside and outside the classroom in these post-colonial contexts.

The distinction made by Ringbom (1987) may assist our understanding. He suggests that in the situation of second language acquisition the language is spoken in the *immediate environment* [emphasis added] of the language learner and in this environment the learner has positive opportunities to use the language in natural communicative situations and that it may or may not be supplemented by classroom teaching. Here Ringbom's distinction differs from that of Hamers and Blanc (2000) where he maintains that the language needs to be spoken in the immediate environment of the learners as opposed to being present around the learner. On the other hand, in the foreign language-learning context the language is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment and although the mass media may provide opportunities for practicing receptive skills of the language there is little or no opportunity for the learner to use the language in a natural communicative situation (Ringbom, 1987). This distinction is of importance given that, for example, in Norway English is present around the learner, but it is not spoken in the immediate environment to any degree thus it is seen as a foreign language

and not an L2. However, this highlights the problem facing the definition of the ex-colonial languages in many post-colonial settings and it is of critical importance for this study.

Furthermore, Phillipson (1991:42) poses the question: Second or Foreign – an academic point, or a matter of educational life or death for particular learners? In attempting to get some clarification on the usage of the terms foreign language and second language in North America and Britain, Phillipson searched the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. As a result of this search Phillipson states the following:

It goes without saying that there are quite different teaching needs and strategies in the many various ESL and EFL situations. Yet judging by this authoritative definition, the same label, ESL, is supposed to do service for a multitude of different contexts, in addition to which in North America ‘foreign’ and ‘second’ are used interchangeably. In practice this is often the case in Britain too. It is highly questionable, however, whether the richness of empirical contexts, which are constantly evolving, is well served by such all-embracing, overlapping concepts as EFL and ESL. In fact the dividing-line between ESL and EFL fluctuates, and strict use of one term or the other may confuse social and educational issues (Phillipson, 1991:43).

The example given by Phillipson (1991:43) is an interesting one: “Bangladesh would be categorized as an ESL country, but the amount of English that most schoolgoing Bangladeshi children are exposed to may be so small, and probably experienced exclusively in a classroom, that teaching should be organized for an EFL situation”. This is also the situation in many contexts throughout South Africa. Therefore I argue that in these contexts English should not be defined as a second language, but that it fits more with the definition of a foreign language, but politicians and even parents do not like to call them “foreign”. As a result teaching in these contexts should reflect this understanding of the difference that exists. Martha Qorro (2003), an expert on the teaching of English in Tanzania, argues that having English as a SL in school rather than as a FL is detrimental both to the teaching of English as a FL and the acquisition of academic content.

Accordingly, there are some important questions to consider, namely: What are the critical attributes of the “construct” that we refer to as second language education or foreign language education? What are the similarities, and what are the differences? Or as Ringbom (1987:27) asks: “What, then, are the differences between second language acquisition and foreign language learning and how do they affect learners” (Ringbom, 1987:27)? He groups the most

important situational differences under the headings of *time*, *input*, *teacher's role*, and *skills*. With these situational differences in mind I now turn my attention to Ringbom's model of the differences between these two types of language learning.

4.6.2.1 Ringbom's model of SLA versus FLL

In this section the distinction between FLL and SLA is discussed vis-à-vis Ringbom's model. Ringbom argues that the contextual differences between foreign and second language are important and that they have a considerable effect on the learners. In SLA the language is spoken in the immediate environment, which allows the learners access to use the language in natural communication situations and often with native speakers of the language. It may also be supplemented by classroom teaching. With the foreign language learner there is a limited amount of time that is spent on the task at hand and it is generally confined to the time spent in school studying the language in opposition to second language learners who have more time for both conscious and unconscious learning of the target language (TL). Furthermore, the foreign language learner is exposed to a very limited quantity of highly selected, structured and sequenced input and limited quality in comparison to the second language learner who is exposed to both rich and varied input, but yet these language samples are at times not very organized and thus the learner must decide what is of relevance. Krashen (1985) originally developed the input hypothesis as part of an overall theory of second language acquisition. The hypothesis claims that "humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input'" (Krashen, 1985:2). Thus for Krashen input is seen as the essential environmental ingredient and in learning an additional language input requires both quality and quantity. The second language learner is said to learn by unguided discovery and that peers are an important aspect in their language learning and if there is formal teaching as well it is of secondary importance. However, foreign language learning generally takes place in a classroom situation with little or no learning from peers. In most classroom settings the emphasis on written materials and much of the time is spent in preparation for the lessons and exams, which in turn makes the oral skills less important. In general the classroom situation does not provide an authentic need or opportunity for practicing spoken language in a natural communicative context. The role of memorization in these contexts does not provide for these opportunities either. The sequence of skills in the classroom setting in general depends on the aims and methods of the course. In

comparison the second language learner is in a situation where oral skills are essential and the comprehension of natural speech is also seen as particularly significant. These situational differences in Ringbom's model are summarized in the table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2: Differences in FLL and SLA (Ringbom's model)

	FLL	SLA
TIME	Limited time generally confined to school only.	Unlimited time for both consciousness and unconsciousness learning.
INPUT	Limited quantity of highly selected and structured input.	Rich and varied input, but generally unstructured.
TEACHER'S ROLE	Teacher plays a major role with little or no peer learning.	Peers play a major role. If formal learning is also involved it is of secondary importance.
SKILLS	Emphasis on written skills and test taking ability. Oral skills are less important as there is little or no opportunity to practice.	Oral skills are essential and natural speech comprehension is significant.

Ringbom also argues that social and affective variables are important in second language acquisition and the attitudes towards the target language and its speakers as well as the status of the language in comparison to the learner's L1 are significant factors. Given that success or failure in second language acquisition may have considerable social consequences these learners generally achieve some basic linguistic competence in the target language. Furthermore, the informal environment that SLA learners find themselves in provides opportunities for practicing the language in a variety of situations where the L2 learner might be required to draw on a number of communicating strategies in order to cope with the problem of comprehension.

In contrast, the typical foreign language learning classroom situation differs with that of the second language learner as described above. First older children and teenagers often benefit greatly from formal study, although their success is dependent on a number of factors such as the classroom situation and the attitudes towards the teacher. What takes place in many schools is that even a FL learner who by all accounts may be described as a good learner has not taken the initiative nor had the opportunity to initiate face-to-face communicative interaction. In the foreign language learning context, features related to general learning aptitude such as verbal ability, memory, patience, consciousness, are believed to be essential ingredients. Ringbom argues that this is linked with the fact that few classroom situations are

able to provide pupils with the opportunity to practice their oral skills in natural environments. The success of foreign language learners is essentially measured by their ability to pass tests, generally comprising of grammatical and lexical items in isolation or in short sentences. "These tests have correctness as the one and only norm" and the results do not always correlate with the demands of a second language learner which require the ability to communicate in a variety of situations (Ringbom, 1987:29). Thus in foreign language-learning cognitive variables play an important role as opposed to social ones. Furthermore, the foreign language learner's motivation is generally instrumental and the pupil may study the language very conscientiously to fulfill the immediate short-term goal of passing exams. The learners in this situation often have passive attitudes as well and there is generally not pressure on these students to be creative and active. In the classroom setting the decisions as to the most significant aspects of the target language are made by the teacher and includes the teaching method, the syllabus and even the exams as well. However, Ringbom also asserts that teachers are not solely responsible, given that they have to cope with problems that are to some extent inherent in the situation and in part may stem from the prevailing national syllabus or examination system.

This distinction then between FLL and SLA is seen as important for this study given that the additive multilingual approach suggested by the Ministry of Education is defined as second language learning as opposed to foreign language learning. As a result, this distinction may have implications for the methods used in the classrooms. Another important issue is raised by Hamers and Blanc (2000:233-234) that "the sociopolitical status of the target language is relevant: in a multilingual country [like South Africa], learning the official language as an L2 is not done for the same reasons as learning a foreign language." Certainly this point is important given the history of apartheid and that even when indigenous languages were used as the medium of instruction it was done so for ideological and not pedagogical reasons. Furthermore, the languages of the colonizers were seen as the languages of power and learning them was done for political and economic reasons.

4.6.3 Deciding on a model for SLA and why

The research on second language acquisition during the last decade has highlighted, according to Bialystok (1991:4), that “second-language learning was complex in ways that seemed irrelevant to first-language acquisition, and the contribution of the research on that problem was at least to identify some of the individual difference factors that conspired to produce that complexity”. The majority of the studies carried out in the 1970s were, for example, focused mainly on adult second-language learners, a trend that still continues¹⁰⁸. Moreover, it remains an empirical question whether or not language acquisition is the same for mature adults as it is for children. As previously mentioned the commonsense belief that children are more successful than adults has also been challenged both theoretically and empirically (Ervin-Tripp, 1974; Singelton, 1997; Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978).

According to Spolsky (1988) *learning conditions* are the factors, either external or internal, that influence learning. Oxford (1997) asserts that L2 learning conditions are then the inner or outer influences on the acquisition of communication capacities in a post-L1 language. The most elaborate set of L2 learning conditions to date was developed by Spolsky. In this set he lists 74 conditions that are divided into eight groups: (1) Linguistic outcomes, (2) psycholinguistic conditions, (3) individual differences in ability and personality, (4) linguistic issues, (5) social context of L2 learning, (6) attitudes and motivation, (7) learning opportunities, and (8) optimal conditions for formal L2 learning. Although there are those who find Spolsky’s framework valuable due to its comprehensiveness this also adds to the complexity of working with this framework. While I do not deny the usefulness of Spolsky’s framework I have chosen to make use of another model, which I believe to be more appropriate for this study. This model, based on the work by Lily Wong-Fillmore (1991), addresses the issue of L2 acquisition by young children and is supported by rich longitudinal data collected by Wong-Fillmore and her colleagues while studying the language acquisition of immigrant children in educational settings.

Despite my previous discussion about the difference in second language acquisition and foreign language learning and given that those involved in this study may be better described by the latter category, I choose to make use of this model. This is done in order to highlight

¹⁰⁸ My review of the AILA abstracts publication for the 13th World Congress held in Singapore in 2002 supports this fact. That is to say, the majority of the studies involving second language acquisition had adult learners as their sample population with only a few studies focusing on children.

the fact that although many researchers and policy-makers compare majority groups in post-colonial contexts to such immigrant groups the reality is somewhat different. In purposefully choosing such a model I hope to highlight both the similarities and differences between these groups. In following with Phillipson's (1991) argument I underline how the incorporation of the notion and study of the diverse fields of SLA and FLL can contribute to the development of a more complete model of language learning in post-colonial contexts.

4.6.3.1 Wong-Fillmore's model of SLA

Children do not go to school to learn to *speak* [italics added] their mother tongue; second-language learners (who have previously become native speakers of a first language) sometimes do but the instruction they get can be fragmentary, not structured according to known principles of language acquisition and as a result, possibly very misleading, and devoid of constant and consistent individualized corrective feedback (Sharwood Smith, 1991:12).

The context of this study is aptly phrased in the above quote, namely the instructional circumstances. In an attempt to understand the nature of the process of additional language learning in the context of this study I have chosen to make use of a model of language acquisition developed as a result of a longitudinal study of children learning English as a second language. This model is based on the study of over 200 five- to eleven-year-old children who are immigrants to the US.¹⁰⁹ My reasons for using this model will be discussed in detail later in this section.

Wong-Fillmore (1991:51) asserts that the variation found “across learners in acquiring second languages simply cannot be accounted for by the differences in learners alone. Other sources of variation can be found in the settings in which languages are learned as well as in the speakers who are providing access to the target language and assistance in learning it”. These

¹⁰⁹ The sample discussed by Wong-Fillmore consisted of children in two different studies: One was a three year study in which 4 groups of children were tracked for 3 years, beginning in their kindergarten year, and ending as they completed the second grade. In this study 2 groups were Spanish speakers and 2 were Asians, mostly Chinese and some Vietnamese children. The other investigation consisted of third and fifth graders who were studied for about two years. In developing the model the total sample ranged in grade level from kindergarten through the fifth grade. All of the children had immigrant backgrounds, although some were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents while others came to the U.S. with their parents. The majority of the Spanish-speakers were from Mexico, while the rest were from Central America namely El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. The Chinese children were primarily from China by way of Hong Kong, and a few were from Taiwan. The Vietnamese children were from Vietnam, although some had spent their earliest years in refugee camps in Thailand before they were able to find their way to the U. S (Wong-Fillmore, e-mail communication, March 2, 2003).

differences are important in the South African context given the considerable variation found among students in learning i.e. English as an additional language.

Furthermore, she maintains, “the model is a complex social one, and is difficult to talk about in purely abstract terms” (Wong-Fillmore, 1991:51). Rather she suggests that the model is better understood by demonstrating how the components fit together in relation to situations that are familiar to many of us. Here I have chosen to describe and highlight the important components of this model, which will then be used as an analytical tool in understanding the language-learning situation of those learners involved in this investigation.

Before continuing, however, I would first like to note that the description of the typical second-language learner, given by Wong-Fillmore, is seen as members of an immigrant family in societies such as Canada and the United States. This description forms the basis of much of the work conducted in the field of second language acquisition and multilingualism and arguably a situation that does not fit the context of this study. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned the lack of models based on such groups as the one found in this research, makes it useful to use frameworks developed on the basis of immigrant or indigenous minority groups on the way to developing a more relevant model. Consequently, what is then needed is a comparison of these groups¹¹⁰ showing not only their similarities, but also their differences and from this type of comparison a new model of additional language acquisition/learning may emerge.

To further elaborate the description presented above of the typical L2 learner and their social situation Wong-Fillmore also states the following:

The family speaks a language other than English, and continues to use it in the home and in the immigrant community. At the same time, however, the members of the family know they will have to learn English in order to get along in their adopted society. English is the key to getting acquainted with the people who live there, to getting an education, and most importantly to getting jobs. They have a genuine need to learn the language, and are motivated to do so because it offers them access to the social and economic life of the community *they are joining* [italics added].

¹¹⁰ The groups here refer to the immigrant minority groups as described by Wong-Fillmore and the majority groups that are often treated as linguistic minorities in their respective countries.

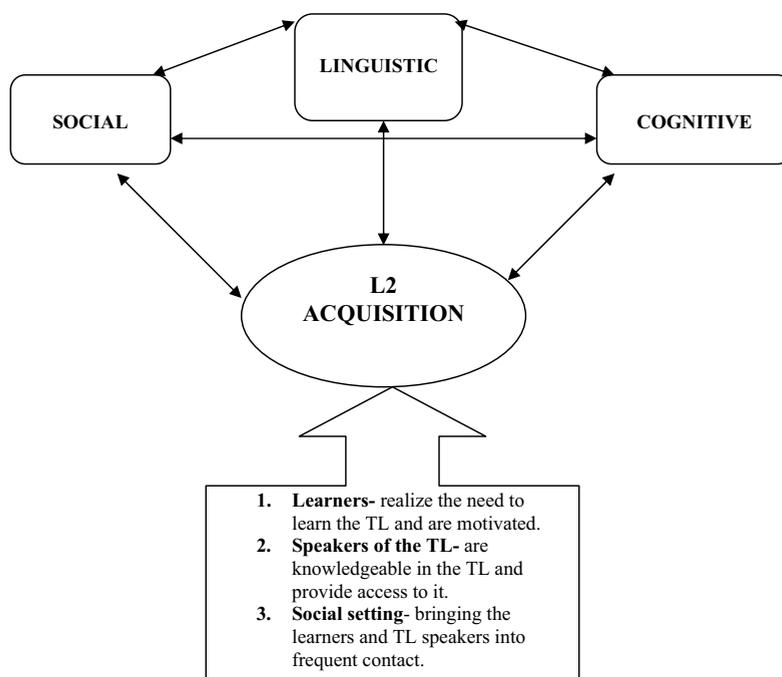
The immigrant family is in an *ideal situation* [italics added] for language learning since it resides in a setting that provides generous exposure to the language in use. The members of the family can hear and learn the language in the workplace, classroom, neighborhood, and playground – wherever they come into contact with people who speak the target language well enough to help learn it. Language learning requires the help and involvement of people who already speak it: their speech behavior allows the learners to figure out how the language works, provided they are mindful and considerate of the learner's linguistic limitations (Wong-Fillmore, 1991:52).

The majority population in South Africa does not find itself in this position and as such this description does not fit the context of this study. First of all the family is not *joining* a community, but in many ways they are still forced to learn, in this case, English as an additional language. The family in this context is also not in an *ideal situation* given that they are not in an environment that exposes them to the TL. These factors among others are important to keep in mind then when making use of such theories to assist us in our understanding of additional language acquisition in contexts such as the one in this investigation. Thus the situation described above is far removed from the context found in this study and it is an important distinction that will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

According to Wong-Fillmore (1991:52-53 emphasis original) the necessary ingredients for L2 learning are the following: (1) *learners* who realize that they need to learn the target language (TL) and are motivated to do so; (2) *speakers of the target language* who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it; and (3) a *social setting* which brings learners and TL speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible. She also argues that all three ingredients are essential and if any of them is dysfunctional, learning the target language will be difficult if not impossible. However, when all three are ideal language learning is assured.

In the model are also three types of processes that correspond with language learning (these processes are involved in both first language learning and additional language learning) and each is interrelated, as previously mentioned these are: (1) *social*, (2) *linguistic*, and (3) *cognitive* (Wong-Fillmore, 1991:53). I envision the interrelations of the model in Figure 4.2 and schematize it as follows:

FIGURE 4.2: Wong-Fillmore Second Language Acquisition Model



Thus the social, linguistic and cognitive processes are involved in all language learning situations, but in L2 learning they vary as opposed to the L1 situation where the learners, speakers of the TL, and the social setting, which may be described as *the English language infrastructure* (Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002), are seen as the necessary ingredients for L2 learning. Wong-Fillmore's explanation of the model highlights how these various processes work both individually and collectively. Due to constraints of length I will only briefly describe these processes (for a detailed discussion see Wong-Fillmore, 1991:52-66).

1. **Social processes** – These are the steps taken by the learners and the TL speakers to create a social setting in which communication by means of the target language is possible and desired.
 - Learners ordinarily require social contact with people who speak the TL to learn their language. These contacts give the learners both the incentive and the opportunity to learn the new language. They allow the learners to observe the language as TL speakers in natural communication use it.

2. ***Linguistic processes*** – The ways in which assumptions held by the speakers of the TL cause them to speak as they do in talking to learners – that is to select, modify, and support the linguistic data they produce for the sake of the learner.
 - These intersect with the social processes in such a way that what the learners need from their social contacts is enough linguistic evidence to allow them to discover how the language works and how people use it. This linguistic evidence is referred to as input.¹¹¹ Also cognitive processes intersect with linguistic ones where learners build on their previous linguistic knowledge to assist them learning the TL.

3. ***Cognitive processes*** – These processes are central in acquisition and involve the analytical procedures and operations that take place in the heads of the learners and ultimately result in the acquisition of the TL. In the cognitive task the primary linguistic data that the learners have available to them as input for their analyses consist of speech samples produced by speakers of the TL during social contacts in which the learners are also participants.
 - It is argued that in second language learning two kinds of cognitive processes are involved. The first is a specialized cognitive process, which operates differently from ordinary cognitive processes that is based on the work of Chomsky (1965, 1975) and it is known as the *language-acquisition device* (LAD). The proponents of this proposal believe that the linguistic rules are already “known” to the acquisition device and in some abstract way they require exposure to the linguistic data to trigger their discovery.
 - The second mechanism are those involved in more general intellectual functioning and may include a number of cognitive strategies such as associative skills, memory, social knowledge, and inferential skills to assist them in figuring out what people are talking about (Wong-Fillmore, 1991:53-59).

These processes described above play a critical role in language learning and they operate together with the major components previously identified as: (1) the learners, (2) speakers of the TL, and (3) the social setting.

Wong-Fillmore proposes that there may be a variation in these components that is the learners, the social settings, and/or the TL speakers and she describes how they work or do not work in relation to the process discussed above. If we take the typical language learners as described earlier, the classroom setting is considered by Wong-Fillmore as less than an ideal setting for adult language learning. This is partly given that there is generally only one TL speaker (the teacher) to support the efforts of many language learners (the students). How well teachers work for language learning depends on the adequacy of their methods and

¹¹¹ The TL speaker may make adjustments to their language when speaking to anyone who is not fully proficient in the language. One such adjustment is known as “foreigner talk” implies the simplification of one’s language when addressing a non-fluent foreign speaker (cf Appel & Muysken, 1987 or Hamers & Blanc, 2000 for a detailed discussion of this accommodation strategy).

materials, and the receptiveness of the students to formal language instruction. Also the kind of language learners hear and practice in such settings can vary considerably in its richness and usefulness. It is proposed that for second language learning, particularly for adults, informal social encounters and workplace encounters with TL speakers are superior to the classroom setting (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). This may be the case in the immigrant setting, but it does not fit the reality of the African context, as such encounters are generally nonexistent. Additionally, it is argued that children of immigrant families are said to be in the ideal situation for learning the TL given that they come into contact with TL speakers in school and they find themselves in classrooms surrounded by native TL speakers (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Thus in this setting the social conditions previously outlined are met. However, in the context of this study the social conditions outlined by Wong-Fillmore are not met.

The variation between first- and second-language learning is a fundamental issue given the individual difference between the two types of learners. A major factor in this variation is the involvement of cognitive mechanisms that were previously discussed. The variability found in second-language learning can be traced to differences found among learners in the application of the general mechanisms and ability that play a part in language learning (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). The variation in language learning along the cognitive dimension is not just a matter of differences in learner endowments, but is also affected by other learner variables such as age and personality.

Likewise, variation in both TL speakers and social settings affect the social and linguistic processes that feature in language acquisition. Firstly social settings may vary in the opportunities they offer for language learning by in part the number of TL speakers in comparison to language learners, partly by the structure of the setting and the purpose (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Thus social settings are optimal for language learning when the TL speakers outnumber the language learners and when they are designed to allow the utmost interaction between the two groups. An opposite situation will result in the following:

Some settings provide learners with few opportunities to get close enough to speakers of the language to do them any good, or the kinds of contacts they provide are inadequate for language-learning purposes. The contacts may be too brief, or too infrequent, or too limiting in the kind of exchanges they allow (Wong-Fillmore, 1991: 63).

Wong-Fillmore maintains that the classroom situation may be the ideal setting for (immigrant) children in acquiring the TL she notes that classrooms differ in “the quality and quantity of input they provide learners” (Wong-Fillmore, 1991:64). In this setting the immigrant children are often together in a class with mother tongue speakers of the language. Following the argument by Ringbom (1987) peers then play a major role as they provide social contact with mother tongue speakers of the TL, which allows the learners the opportunity to observe the language as it is used by the TL speakers in natural communication (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). This is, however, not the case for the majority of learners in throughout Africa as they are generally in a homogeneous language environment, where the TL is a foreign language for them and their peers as well as the teachers. Furthermore, the setting described by Wong-Fillmore may include learners outnumbering TL speakers, which leads to the learners having limited or even no contact with the TL speakers or if the TL speakers are themselves imperfect speakers of the TL the input they provide for the learners may not be an adequate representation of what the learners should be striving for. This situation was noted by Macdonald (1990:162) as one of the major constraints for teachers in the black schools in South Africa referring to “the poverty of the teachers’ English language proficiency” which makes even teaching the language as a subject difficult let alone using it as a medium of instruction across the curriculum.

Although it is proposed that interaction with TL speakers is necessary Wong-Fillmore notes that there are cases where learners can acquire the TL by observing their teachers and peers, but that this ability depends on the structure of the classroom setting, the kind of language used, and the characteristics of the individual learners. It has been argued that the model may also cope with situations such as the one found in this study by categorizing them as ones in which learners do not have the “social” motivation to learn the L2. In other words, they do not need to know it to get by socially [but in many ways they do] and the setting is not one that supports easy interaction with speakers of the target language given that it may be defined as a foreign language situation (Wong-Fillmore, e-mail communication March 3, 2002). That is they do not have an integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) in learning the language. Rather, these learners have an instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) to learn the language in which economic factors play a major role. Gardner and Lambert (1972:12-15) argue that socio-psychological factors relate strongly to achievement in second-language learning, which includes social motivation (of an integrative sort) and a secondary kind of motivation of the instrumental type. The learner’s attitudes towards the TL

community (if there is a TL community) are believed to affect their success in learning because the motivation to learn the L2 is determined by these attitudes. Learners with an integrative motivation, i.e. the aim to become a member of the TL community, will learn the L2 better than those with an instrumental motivation, i.e. learners who only want to learn the TL because of (limited) commercial, educational, or other instrumental reasons. An important variable here is that the classroom setting needs to offer the learners access to meaningful input, and opportunities to practice the language in the context of structured instructional activities. Thus differences in structure and class composition are important aspects that can affect language learning. Furthermore, differences in TL speakers can also affect language acquisition.

TL speakers affect the process by the quality and quantity of support they provide the learners. Thus individuals whose role is that of the TL speaker must know the language well enough to provide reliable samples of the language for the learners to work on. Wong-Fillmore argues that in classrooms where everyone or almost everyone is a language learner, the speech the learners generally hear is produced by learners in a similar position as they are and that the language produced is representative of an *interlanguage* rather than an advanced form of the TL. This concept originally introduced by Selinker (1972) postulates the existence of a system somewhere between the native language and the language to be learned. This system he termed “interlanguage”, defining it as a “separate linguistic system” based on observable output, which results from a learner’s attempted production of a target language norm, where the target language is defined as one norm of one dialect. This interlanguage system relies upon access to the *latent language structure* proposed by Lenneberg (1967:376) - a device already pre-wired in the brain as a counterpart to universal grammar, transformed into a “realized” structure of a particular grammar coinciding with maturational stages from infancy to adulthood. Appel and Muysken (1987: 83) stress that “although the term seems to imply it, interlanguage is *not* a kind of language somewhere between the first and the second language with structural features from both, but rather an intermediate system characterized by features resulting from language-learning strategies.” It is important that if the teachers are the ones who are presumably proficient in the additional/foreign language then they need to provide students with the necessary corrective feedback. However, some researchers have found that in certain cases very little of this necessary feedback is provided to the learners (Swain, 1988 cited in Wong-Fillmore, 1991:65).

Also attitudes and beliefs held by the TL speakers may affect the role that they themselves play in language learning. In particular Wong-Fillmore (1991:65) notes the following: “how they feel about interacting with the learners; what they regard as their responsibility to the learners; what they believe about their own ability to communicate with the learners [in the TL] and about the learners ability to understand and to speak [the TL]; and what they think would be helpful to the learners”. She asserts that these variables affect communication and learning in all settings including the classroom where the teacher is the only TL speaker. Where the teacher does not work well in giving input or in unstructured situations that affect input, it is argued that the learner plays a greater role in acquiring the input and support they need for language learning. Thus variables such as personality, social style, social competence, motivation, and attitudes in both learners and speakers of the TL may affect language learning.

In conclusion, it is argued by Wong-Fillmore (1991) that variation in the three components can crucially affect the outcome of the language acquisition process. Attempts have been made to find simple explanations for variation and for language learning. However, Wong-Fillmore proposes that the processes that figure in language learning may only be understood when all of the components of this model are considered.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the key concepts used in research related to bilingualism and some of the theories surrounding literacy, bilingualism, bilingual education and language acquisition. I have also presented a discussion of critical theory and its connection to critical discourse analysis. These discussions are relevant as the study involves an analysis of the Language-in-Education Policy (through the use of critical discourse analysis) and of the practice (related to the discussion surrounding literacy, bilingualism, bilingual education and language acquisition). In the chapter the theories on bilingualism have been challenged as they are seen as insufficient in dealing with the group participating in the study (and other oppressed majority groups in post-colonial contexts) and it is argued that more appropriate theories need to be developed. A major concern is that second language acquisition, a term often used to describe the language learning situation in these contexts, may not be the most appropriate term and that perhaps the situation found in such contexts may be closer to a foreign language learning context. In light of this I will, however, make use of both the

second language acquisition model combined with the foreign language learning model presented in this chapter as a tool in analyzing the language learning situation found in this investigation.

Ultimately, the theories presented in this chapter are used to assist me in understanding the data collected in this investigation. These theories offer a perspective on language learning and language acquisition in multilingual contexts that make it possible to approach the transformation of the classroom data and allow me to make connections between the two different models discussed in this chapter (the FLL model and the SLA model). These models are compared with the actual classroom practice to see where they converge and diverge in an attempt to begin to develop more appropriate models. Finally these theories will be utilized to assist me in pointing out a new direction in the field of applied linguistics and educational research and in particular that of learning an additional language in the African context. More appropriate terminology and theories may then enable us to draw conclusions that until now have been clouded by our adherence to unsuitable ones. I now turn my attention to the presentation and discussion of the methodological framework and data collection methods used in this study.

Chapter 5. Methodological Framework

5.1 Introduction

While the historical and linguistic contexts of South Africa were presented in chapters 2 and 3, chapter 4 aimed to structure the theoretical framework based on a critical perspective along with the theories and concepts surrounding the field of bilingualism. The current chapter seeks to discuss the methodology and procedures used to explain certain aspects in the field and also to present a discussion of the types of data collected.

Whereas methods are identified as the range of approaches used to gather data, methodology helps us answer the following question: “How do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:19). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) three interconnected activities define the qualitative research process.

The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis). That is, the researcher collects empirical materials bearing on the question [or questions] and then analyzes and writes about them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:18).

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss this methodological approach as related to the research questions; the methods used to collect and analyze the data; the use of critical discourse analysis; concluding with a discussion of validity and reliability.

5.2 A qualitative approach

Despite the abundant literature available on the language-in-education issue in South Africa, the majority of the data is theoretical or policy based and often with a quantitative orientation as opposed to qualitative or ethnographic classroom studies. Few researchers spend time at the grassroots level, asking the participants for their own views and observing the dynamics of the classroom, particularly in economically oppressed areas. Given that the LiEP goals include promoting the use of students’ mother tongues in education in an additive bi-/multilingual way, in connection with the wishes and attitudes of parents, teachers and

students, this investigation has as its aim to examine the views of those very participants along with observing the implementation of the policy at the classroom level. The aim is to look at the relationship between policy and practice while adopting a bottom-up approach in reporting the perspectives of those most directly involved.

For the purposes described above, a qualitative research approach was chosen, with the emphasis on capturing or representing in considerable depth what was “going on” in the implementation of the LiEP. In order to capture this, a qualitative research design is chosen which makes use of an ethnographic approach to collect the classroom data. Qualitative research is viewed as holistic and allows for environmental factors believed to affect the implementation of the LiEP to be incorporated into the study. Furthermore, it has been argued that this approach offers the researcher an “understanding of the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behavior” (Brock-Utne, 1996:609). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) describe qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative researchers study things [and people] in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Thus qualitative research often means that the research seeks to collect data in naturally occurring situations and environments. The roots of naturalism are derived from ethnographic research methods and are associated with anthropology. The methodology of this type of enquiry is applicable in other areas of social science as well. Qualitative research using the ethnographic method seeks to satisfy two conditions: (1) the use of close-up detailed observation of the natural world by the investigator and (2) the attempt to avoid prior commitment to any theoretical model (Yin, 1994:14). Some researchers have noted that the researcher will often begin the research with some background of the literature, but that there is “no need to have reviewed all the literature beforehand” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:50). Vulliamy (1990) adds that it is not until the researcher begins to get a better perspective of those they are studying that the significant issues become apparent. Thus, this type of research suggests that the researcher embark on the research without predetermined categories, questionnaires or precise hypotheses, methods that are frequently associated with positivistic

social science. However, a qualitative approach does not rule out the use of methods usually affiliated with positivism and it has even been suggested that the two main approaches may be combined (Patton, 1990). For example, Patton (1990:43-44) suggests that

Qualitative data can be collected in experimental designs where participants have been randomly divided into treatment and control groups: Likewise, some quantitative data [like test items or survey questionnaires] may be collected in naturalistic [qualitative] inquiry approaches.

My argument against positivism is based on my epistemological position and not against the use of quantitative methods per se. Hence, my position is based on a critical theoretical approach (cf chapter 4) which views the subject matter of the social sciences (people and their institutions) as fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. Habermas (1974) argues that cognitive interest motivating natural science is that of instrumental control and that while this is legitimate in the study of physical phenomena, it is inappropriate for the study of human behavior. For Habermas an interpretive research approach is more appropriate in social science precisely because humans have the capacity to interpret the social world and to be active agents. The fundamental nature of qualitative research is described as:

...a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter, and an on going critique of the politics and methods of positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:4).

In addition, qualitative research often emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data, which is the case in this investigation where the voices of those involved in the implementation of the policy are in focus. Brock-Utne (1996:617) notes that one of the contributions of a qualitative research approach is that it focuses on the “actual implementation of policies in school and thus assessing the points at which policy and practice converge and diverge”. It has also been argued that there is a need to be “tuned to the everyday realities of the classroom and to the motivations and capabilities of ordinary teachers” (Vulliamy, 1990:17). Vulliamy asserts that the research methods typically used in developing countries, for example traditional quantitative input-output studies, notably those conducted by the World Bank, have a tendency to reproduce the rhetoric of policies, which “make it difficult to penetrate any marked divorce between policy and practice” (Vulliamy, 1990:17). While many of these quantitative studies assume that the policy has actually been implemented and that the implementation corresponds to the policy directives, this is not

always the case as policies are often not implemented or the implementation is not consistent with the policy objectives (Brock-Utne, 1996; Phillipson et al. 1986; Vulliamy, 1990).

Finally, Bryman and Burgess (1994:2) contend that:

...qualitative research cannot be reduced to particular techniques nor to set stages, but rather that a dynamic process is involved which links together the problem, theories and methods...the focus is upon the links between research design, research strategy and research techniques as well as the relationship between aspects of research design, data collection and data analysis.

The difficulty involved in doing research and writing about it, is not clear cut rather it involves what Bechhofer (1974:73) refers to as “a ‘messy’ interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, [on the one hand and] deduction and induction” on the other, which occur simultaneously. It is this ‘messy’ interaction in doing research that I will now attempt to describe.

5.3 Ethnography in education

Atkinson and Hammersley (1998:129) draw attention to the fact that “across the spectrum of the social sciences, the use and justification of ethnography is marked by diversity rather than consensus”. Thus it is necessary to recognize different theoretical or epistemological positions each of which may endorse a version of ethnography (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). Willis and Trondman (2000:5) ask the question: “what is ethnography for us”?

Most importantly it is a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of rich writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly *in it own terms*, the irreducibility of human experience (Willis & Trondman, 2000:5).

Thus ethnography is a diverse mixture of methods supported by various theoretical or epistemological perspectives, more specifically interpretivism. Ethnography has also been viewed as a philosophical paradigm for some while others see it as a method to be used when and as appropriate, with a range of other positions between these two extremes. Yet, for others ethnography has literally meant the description of culture or cultural groups possessing some common degree of cultural unity (Clifford, 1986).

Initially ethnography was the central concern of anthropology, but in more recent years it has also become of significant interest to linguists, sociologists and educationists alike. Its increasing use in the field of education is, in part, due to the dissatisfaction with experimental designs, which rely heavily on quantitative processing of controlled data. An example of the various applications of ethnography as discussed by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:1-2) is provided below (cf Box 5.1).

Definition Box 5.1: Applications of ethnography

Ethnography is:

- The elicitation of cultural knowledge (Spradley, 1980)
- The detailed investigation of patterns of social interaction (Gumperz, 1981)
- Holistic analysis of societies (Lutz, 1981)
- Essentially descriptive, a form of story telling (Walker, 1981)
- The development and testing of theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Denzin, 1978)

One social research method, drawing on a wide range of sources of information (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983)

(Source: Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:1-2 and van Lier, 1988:52)

Moreover, it is suggested that these conceptions may be plotted along a continuum with three major strands applicable for educational ethnography, which range from strong to weak in terms of theoretical power (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Ethnography continuum

WEAK		STRONG
Tool	Method	Theory
exploration hypothesis-generating	heuristic monitoring	interpretation understanding

(Adapted from van Lier, 1988:54)

It is argued by van Lier (1988) that the theory-building option represents then a strong view of ethnography and can be traced back to naturalistic approaches of social investigations. At the center of the continuum is a hybrid conception of ethnography, which according to van Lier (1988:55) “looks both ways, and aims to employ all reasonable methods of data gathering and analysis in order to investigate an educational setting or problem”. In this option a

combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques may be combined when necessary as well as various forms of triangulation may be utilized. The use of multiple methods of data collection is known as triangulation. The primary purpose of triangulation is to validate the collected data (Patton, 1990; Yin, 1994; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). For example, in ethnography researchers may check out their observations with interview questions to determine whether they might have misunderstood what they had seen. Patton (1990: 244) argues that:

Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on the program. By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the field-worker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings. Each type and source of data has strengths and weaknesses.

Thus the second application suggested by van Lier (1988) best fits the approach utilized in this investigation, with triangulation being used to validate the data along with improving the quality and accuracy of the findings. This would not have been possible through the use of only one method. "Using a combination of data types increases the validity as the strengths of one approach can compensate for the weaknesses of another approach" (cf Patton, 1990:244 and Marshall & Rossman, 1989:79-111). Classroom ethnography has also been described as "varying from purely naturalistic to partly statistical in method, and from focused studies using ethnomethodological, sociolinguistic, and/or discourse analytic methods to studies combining micro-macro analytic concerns within a critical framework" (Watson-Gegeo, 1997:135).

This investigation has utilized the methods of ethnography in education by studying people in their natural surroundings as opposed to artificial settings. Thus the emphasis on policy and practice has resulted in a combined micro-macro analytical investigation. I use critical discourse analysis to analyze the LiEP and its development (the macro) together with an ethnographic research approach in exploring the implementation of the policy at the classroom level (the micro) supported by a critical theoretical approach (presented in chapter 4).

In her description of classroom ethnography, Watson-Gegeo (1997:136) notes that it involves intensive detailed observations of a classroom over an extended period of time (for example, a

semester or school year), recording a large sample of classroom activities on audio- or videotape, with observations being supplemented by interviews with teachers, students and other participants. Before turning to a discussion of the actual data collection and description of the research setting I will briefly describe the process of preparing for the fieldwork.

5.3.1 *Preparing for the field*

“Fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative enquiry” (Patton, 1990: 46). In the field the researcher is able to have direct contact with the people under study in their natural surroundings (Patton, 1990). This allows the researcher the possibility to get close to the situations and the people being studied in order that the realities may be understood, something which many quantitative studies fail to do.

Before embarking on the field study it was important to develop *a research design*. A research design is viewed as “an action plan for getting from here to there” (Yin, 1994: 19). Yin (1994) defines a research design as a ‘blueprint’ of the research, which deals with four problems: (1) what question to study, (2) what data is relevant, (3) what data to collect, and (4) how to analyze the results. A research design is viewed as necessary in order to avoid collecting data that is not relevant to the research question. Additionally, in preparing for data collection it is suggested that researchers develop a *case study protocol*, which is divided into four areas (Yin, 1994:54-77):

1. An overview of the case study project – this includes project objectives, research issues, and relevant readings about the topic being investigated.
 - I chose to divide this into three subsections, which include *project objectives*, *background information* and *objectives being examined* with rationale for site selection and *broader theoretical or policy relevance issues* included.
2. Field procedures – this includes credentials and access to the study sites, general sources of information and procedural reminders.
3. Research project questions – included here are the specific questions that the research project must keep in mind during data collection.
 - In this section I broke down my questions into two areas, which included policy questions and classroom realities. I also listed here possible sources of evidence for answering each of these questions.
4. A guide for the case study/research study report (this is in the form of an outline, a format for the narrative and specification of any biographical information and documentation).

This type of work beforehand has helped to clearly define the research and target my investigation to specific areas of concern where relevant data has been collected. I have also found it useful to refer to this protocol from time to time in order to ascertain whether or not I have obtained the relevant data, which will allow me to answer the main research questions. This protocol together with the way in which I recorded my observation data (cf 5.3.4.1) in which an elementary form of analysis was embedded then allowed me to constantly consider the main research questions in relation to the data and initial analysis.

5.4 Data collection

Knowing what you want to find out leads inexorably to the question of *how* you will get that information (Miles and Huberman, 1984:42 emphasis original).

While the study also pertains to the language policy at the decision-making level (macro level), it is mainly concerned with the micro level. As a result the main sources of information concerning the actual implementation of the LIEP are those at the grassroots, which involved an ethnographic investigation and included classroom observations (in particular participant observation cf 5.3.4 for more discussion) along with semi-formal thematic interviews with teachers, learners and school principals. Other interviews consisted of semi-formal thematic interviews with key informants in the area of language in South Africa and educational language policy. In addition to the semi-formal thematic interviews there were also a number of informal interviews, in the form of discussions and conversations, which were recorded in my research diary. These informal interviews/discussions were with teachers, students, and principals as well as with parents and other informants, and they were generally in the form of informal conversations that were often unplanned with the information being recorded in my research diary simultaneously or immediately after the discussions. These discussions can be described as improvisational and allowed for a more nuanced perspective in the research. The observations along with the interviews serve as the main methods of data collection (table 5.1). However, other methods are also utilized and included video recordings (which helped with among other things the translation from Xhosa to English provided by research assistants from UWC), fieldnotes and a research diary, a reading comprehension task and document analysis.

Table 5.1: Data gathering techniques

• Interviews	Semi-structured thematic interviews with teachers, students, principals and other key informants
• Observations	In primary school classrooms grade 4 in three township schools
• Video recordings	Recordings of the reading comprehension lessons and other classroom lessons
• Fieldnotes	Fieldnotes obtained while in South Africa, which included information collected from informal discussions
• Reading comprehension task	Comprehension task with assessment in three schools using 3 different methods
• Research diary	Information about the research process and general thoughts
• Document analysis	Documents including the LiEP, the South African Constitution, other language policy documents and archival records

Researchers often rely on triangulation or the use of several kinds of methods or data as noted from the table above. Denzin (1989a:236-244) identifies four basic types of triangulation:

1. *data triangulation*: the use of a variety of data sources in a study
2. *investigator triangulation*: the use of several different researchers or evaluators
3. *theory triangulation*: the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data
4. *methodological triangulation*: the use of multiple methods to study a single problem

In this research I employ different methods (methodological triangulation) such as interviews, observations, documents, fieldnotes and so on (cf table 5.1) in an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin, 1989a). For Patton (1990) triangulation offers a powerful solution to the problem of relying too heavily on any single data source and it involves comparing and cross-checking the different sources of data. In using triangulation the validity and credibility of the findings are increased as different sources of data can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question (Denzin, 1989a).

I will now briefly discuss my rationale for choosing the different methods of data collection and in the separate sections below I provide more details of these different data gathering

techniques. In describing ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:2) assert that it is one social research method that draws on “a wide range of sources of information” as seen in table 5.1 above. It is through ethnography that the meanings of everyday human activities are understood, something that experiments and social surveys are incapable of capturing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

...in order to understand people’s behaviour we must use an approach that gives us access to the meanings that guide that behaviour...As participant observers we can learn the culture or subculture of the people we are studying...

The need to learn the culture of those we are studying is most obvious in the case of societies other than our own. Here, not only may we not know *why* people do what they do, often we do not even know *what* they are doing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:7 emphasis original).

Thus for me it was important to become involved, as a participant observer, in the classrooms in this study in order to shed light on the issues involved in implementing the LiEP and to understand not only the *why*, but also the *what* in these classrooms.

In looking at the field roles the ethnographer or participant observer is likened to a novice where he/she is: “making observations and inferences, asking informants, constructing hypotheses [in the eclectic sense, see 5.4], and acting on them” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:89). What is important between the “lay” novice and the ethnographer is that the latter “attempts to maintain a self-conscious awareness of what is learned, how it has been learned, and the social transactions that inform the production of such knowledge” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983:89). Thus as social scientists we differ from the novice given that our observations are systematic and purposeful in nature. We study our surroundings regularly and repeatedly prompted by questions about the nature of human action, interaction and society. Given the nature of qualitative observations the researcher has the advantage of observing the complexity of the world, where connections, correlations and causes can be witnessed (Adler & Adler, 1994) as they occur in the natural context (for more discussion of my role as a participant observer see 5.3.4). For Adler and Adler (1994:382 emphasis original) observation “produces especially great rigor *when combined with other methods*” and they are particularly valuable as an alternate source of data for the purpose of triangulation. This leads me to discuss the next source of data collection, the qualitative interview.

Qualitative interviewing often used in ethnographic research differs from survey interviews in that the interviews are “unstructured” as opposed to the latter which are “structured” and although all interviews are structured in one way or another by both the researcher and the participants the important distinction is between standardized and reflexive interviewing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Hence, the exact questions are not decided beforehand, but a more flexible approach is used through the use of interview guides that allows for greater flexibility and focuses on open-ended questions as opposed to questions requiring specific pieces of information (for example, “yes” “no” questions) this allows the informants the opportunity to take up issues that they see as important and thus actively make sense of the world, which is one of the aims of qualitative research and this investigation. The interview resembles a conversation and it involves openness, emotional engagement, and the development of a potentially long-term, trusting relationship between the interviewer and the respondent (Oakley, 1981). Having spent several months in the classrooms this type of personal and trusting relationship called for by Oakley and other feminist researchers was developed.

In looking at my rationale for using fieldnotes, a research diary, audio- and video-recordings I rely on the justification presented by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995 specifically chapter 7). For these researchers fieldnotes are seen, not only, as a traditional means of recording observational data, but are also viewed as a central research activity that should be carried out with “as much care and self-consciousness awareness as possible” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:175). Furthermore, a research project that is well organized and theoretically sophisticated with inadequate note-taking will produce poor results. For me it was important to take concrete and descriptive fieldnotes as these served as a major source of information about what was taking place inside the classrooms. Additionally, I used a research diary, separate from fieldnotes taken during classroom observations, as an added source of information. Here the focus was to provide additional information about issues outside of the classroom along with providing a record of my initial analysis of different issues and my own more general thoughts. However, fieldnotes are not able to provide a comprehensive record of the research setting and as such “one should not become totally wedded to the fieldnotes, as if they were the sum total of available information” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:185). As a result other permanent recordings were seen as useful in providing additional sources of information since, for example, verbal interactions (fine grain of speech) between students and teachers is not easily reconstructed (although not impossible) through fieldnotes alone.

For me audio-recordings of interviews were useful allowing me the ability to focus my attention on the actual interview as opposed to note taking and this provided a more accurate representation of the actual interviews for transcription purposes. Given that the interviews with the students required an interpreter the tape recording of these interviews proved especially useful so that other Xhosa speaking colleagues were able to verify the simultaneous translations provided by Dumasani during the actual interviews. In line with the flexible approach to qualitative interviewing the questions were not specifically designed beforehand, rather an interview guide was used that allowed the respondents to take up issues they felt were important. Furthermore, the use of video-recordings provided me with a permanent record of what was taking place in the classrooms and this allowed me the ability to analyze these recordings in more detail at a later stage and to discuss this with those researchers who assisted me in translating the actual Xhosa dialogue that took place between teachers and students. The use of video-recordings was mainly focused on the dialogue that took place in the classroom as opposed to non-verbal interaction.

For me the reading comprehension task was not planned in advance of the data collection, highlighting the flexibility of qualitative research. During the data collection process it became apparent that teachers used a substantial amount of time in preparing students to take exams. This was something that I had not anticipated beforehand (*what* was happening in the classrooms) and thus I felt it was necessary to focus on the testing issue using more conventional evaluation tools as a way to support my own observations (cf 5.3.6 for more information).

Finally, in looking at documents, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest that written accounts of many sorts are regularly produced in various contexts in societies and in these instances ethnographers need to take account of documents as part of the social setting under investigation. For this study many of the documents that were analyzed included policy documents and government papers as well as the literature on the LiEP in South Africa. For Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) the importance of documents as sources of information originated from the early Chicago School and as such is seen as important sources of data even today. Furthermore, documentary materials can range along the dimension from the “informal” to the “formal” or “official”. For Hodder (1994:393) the use of documents are important in qualitative research because “access can be easy and low cost, because the information provided may differ from and may not be available in spoken form, and because

texts endure and thus give historical insight". Hence by using such documents researchers can recognize alternative and often muted voices.

5.4.1 Access

Gaining access to a research setting raises a number of questions that a researcher must keep in mind. For the purposes of this research one question was relevant: Are certain settings more 'closed' to observation? For example Walsh (1998) suggests that 'closed' or 'private' settings, which includes organization or deviant groups and in this case institutions (schools) access is controlled by gatekeepers. Silverman (2000) notes that there are two types of access, namely covert and overt. Covert access is where research is conducted without the subjects' knowledge, whereas overt access means that subjects are informed and permission is given generally by 'gatekeepers' (Silverman, 2000). In this study overt access was used. Covert access would not have been possible as permission needs to be sought, first of all, from the individual schools and where, secondly, being an outsider overt access is seen as both logical and necessary. With respect to overt access the following is noted, "the impression you give may be very important in deciding whether you get access" (Silverman, 2000:198).

Thus *impression management* is seen as important with respect to gaining access to a research site. "Impression management is to do with the 'fronts' that we present to others. It involves avoiding giving an impression that might pose an obstacle to access, while more positively conveying an impression appropriate to the situation" (Silverman, 2000:198-199). With this in mind I now give an example of my dilemma with both site selection and access.

Already in May of 2001 I sent a letter of inquiry to the Deputy Minister of Education in South Africa about obtaining a research permit. After some weeks he replied to my request and informed me that I needed to contact Mr. Peter Present of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). I did this immediately, via e-mail, and awaited his reply. Several weeks passed and I began to get anxious, as I had not heard from Mr. Present's office. I sent several more e-mail inquiries in the following weeks. Finally, in the end of July 2001 I received a reply from his office first apologizing for the delay and secondly with a list of requirements needed to obtain a research permit.

According to my plan I was scheduled to leave for Cape Town on the 1st of September 2001 to begin the research and at this point the pressure was building. However, I managed to get all the documents required and faxed them to the WCED. In the meantime I requested assistance from Mr. Present's deputy in selecting school sites for the project. However, she replied that the department was not in a position to make any suggestions, but that she would e-mail me a list of schools in the Western Cape region. I received the e-mail with three separate attachments, which included all private schools, all public secondary schools and all public primary schools. After opening the document with the public primary schools I became overwhelmed, because the document contained over 1000 school names and addresses. As you would imagine I was at a loss. I had already identified the type of school I wanted to focus my research on (cf 5.3.3 for selection criteria), but this list gave me no help in narrowing down my options. I recall at one point contacting Zubeida Desai an Associate Professor at UWC¹¹², during her sabbatical, and asking for her suggestions. This feeling of uncertainty concerning the selection of school sites was also a result of some of my readings, particularly of Yin (1994) where he maintains that arranging schedules and gaining access before leaving for fieldwork is paramount. This, however, proved impossible and I left Oslo for Cape Town in the beginning of September 2001 as planned without even targeting which schools could be possible research sites.

Shortly after my arrival in Cape Town, I was asked to contact the WCED's Director of Research Mr. Peter Present about my pending research permit. I spoke with Mr. Present's deputy, Mrs. Frances Wessels, who informed me that I had received permission to conduct the research, but that the permit could not be issued until I gave her the name(s) of the school(s) that would be involved. At this point I told her of my dilemma and she suggested that I contact her within the next few days with the names. As a result of 'luck' I came into contact with the schools coordinator for UWC, Mrs. Rosalie Small. I informed her of my dilemma and asked if she could assist me. To my relief she was able to do so, and in accordance with my needs concerning the project we came up with a list of six possible schools. I immediately contacted the WCED research unit and gave them the names. Soon after I had a research permit to conduct research in these schools, but this was contingent upon the schools'

¹¹² I got in touch with Zubeida Desai because she was my main contact at UWC. I originally met Zubeida in January of 2001 when I accompanied Birgit Brock-Utne and Erik Vollen to Cape Town, where they had meetings scheduled with Prof. Desai concerning a NUFU funded project application. It was during this visit that I made the decision to conduct extensive fieldwork in Cape Town. Given the connection between this project and the NUFU project it was only natural that I would be connected to UWC.

willingness to participate. Thus as noted above covert access was not a possible option, nor was it an option I had even considered as both access and entry are seen as sensitive issues. It is believed that a researcher must establish trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with the participants (Janesick, 1998:39-40), which would not have been possible through the use of covert access. Furthermore, there are ethical issues to consider when conducting qualitative research, which becomes problematic with covert access.

Here the issue of gaining access is relevant. Mrs. Small assisted me in contacting the first school located in one of Cape Town's townships and she set up an appointment for me with the school's principal. I went to the school the following day with my research permit in hand and several copies of my project proposal, which outlined the project in detail. I spent several hours at the school meeting with the principal, the deputy, and several teachers. After I explained the project in detail, gave them assurance that I would uphold anonymity and that I would adhere to strict ethical guidelines, I failed to gain access,¹¹³ despite initial interest by the principal and two of the language teachers present. Here it can be said that gaining access may be directly related to the issue of acceptance as described by Silverman in the quote below or it might not necessarily always be a reflection on the researcher and maybe they could just not accommodate my needs. Certainly schools should have the power to decline.

Being non-judgmental is often a key to acceptance in many settings, including informal subcultures and practitioners of a particular trade or profession ... [On the other hand] some subjects will actually want your judgments – providing they are of an 'acceptable' kind (Silverman, 2000:199).

Nevertheless, the situation presented another setback and at first I was unsure how to approach this problem. I felt that I had presented the objectives of the research in a clear and concise way and that I had conducted myself in a professional manner. However, it was not until after this meeting that the question of acceptance was considered. I then gave the situation some thought and felt that perhaps my being an 'outsider', not only ethnically but also coming from abroad, may have had an influence on my ability to gain access into the communities to which I sought to conduct the research. I perhaps needed to reassure these communities of my integrity both personally and professionally. Therefore, I thought it best

¹¹³ Brock-Utne (1981:121-122) also describes her experience in being denied access to a possible research site. She describes how the school was in a difficult transition period and she was informed that there were enough problems to handle, without having to also deal with the presence of a researcher. This is similar to part of the explanation I received from the school where access was denied.

that I asked a Xhosa-speaking person to accompany me to the next few schools feeling that this may increase my chances of gaining not only acceptance in the community but also in gaining access to the schools. This turned out to be a good strategy and with the assistance of Dumasani Spofana¹¹⁴, a colleague at UWC, I managed to secure access to two school sites. I think his accompanying me to the schools gave me a certain amount of credibility with the school administration not only as a researcher, but even as someone who could be trusted. Furthermore, the principals of the two schools where access had been granted were informed that Dumasani would be involved in the project and this may also have eased any doubts with regards to the research project or to me, as Dumasani was seen as a member of the community as opposed to an outsider like me. Initially I had intended to only investigate two schools, but a third school was added after a few weeks. This was the result of my discussions with the Mitchells Plain Circuit Manager who persuaded me to add another school as he felt this school was a good representation of the schools in the area, being an established school and included the original principal and several of the original staff members since it began in 1993. Some of the other possible school sites in the area had relatively new and inexperienced principals while others were unable to accommodate me (as noted in my discussion above) or they were located in parts of the townships with even higher crime rates and thus it was suggested by the Circuit Manager for my personal safety that I not consider these schools. Furthermore, the third school itself expressed interest in participating in the study. Thus as previously mentioned, access was related to the impression that I gave and it is important to keep the following in mind when attempting to obtain access:

Whether or not people have knowledge of social research, they are often more concerned with what kind of *person* the researcher is than with the research itself. They will try to gauge how far he or she can be trusted, what he or she might be able to offer as an acquaintance or a friend, and perhaps how easily he or she could be manipulated or exploited (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:78).

This statement was very relevant to this research and the communities in which I sought to observe, which needed assurance that I could be trusted not only professionally but personally as well. Thus access and entry are sensitive components in qualitative research and the researcher must establish trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with

¹¹⁴I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dumasani Spofana for his invaluable assistance in the project and for his work in translating the reading comprehension task from English into Xhosa as well as translating the students' answers into English, so that I was able to grade them. Furthermore, Dumasani assisted me in the interviews taken with the students.

participants. Consequently, I paid attention to my personal appearance, conducted myself in a professional manner and sought the assistance of a person (Dumasani) with knowledge of the community to assist me in judging an effective strategy for gaining entry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

The ethnographer's negotiation of a role in the setting once access has been gained and the implications of different roles are important to consider in ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, 1995). A particular problem for the researcher in schools is the range of roles available. In some social situations it is relatively easy to become a member of the group being investigated, but in the classroom there are only a few roles available (Brock-Utne, 1981). Brock-Utne (1981:124-125) discusses five possible roles: A teacher, an Australian (a research tourist), a student-teacher (teacher trainee or teacher's assistant), a department official (for example, curriculum advisor or school inspector), and school psychologist. For me the role of a teacher trainee (or teacher's assistant) seemed the most appropriate (cf 5.3.4). Although both teachers and students were informed that I was conducting research it was decided, in collaboration with the teachers, that I would assist them in the classroom, something that teacher trainees or teaching assistants would normally do. This was done in order to make my presence in the classroom seem more "normal" as opposed to artificial in the form of a research tourist (someone who may spend only a brief period of time in the research setting) or even a school inspector as they do not normally spend extended periods of time in the classroom. The role that I took on as a teacher's assistant seemed more natural given the extended period of time I spent in the classroom. As a teacher's assistant I helped to pass out papers, mark workbooks and generally be of help when necessary. For me it was important to have my presence seem as "normal" and non-distracting as possible.

5.4.2 Type of sample

Research designs vary depending on the needs and process of the inquiry. In each situation different sampling issues arise as a result, and the needs and issues vary according to the paradigm being employed. In the study the issue of sampling concerns both those interviewed and the locations chosen for the study. With reference to the interview sample and the research sites, a purposeful approach was chosen in order to achieve a rich and varied

collection of information. Denzin and Lincoln (1998:xiv) suggest that “many postpositivist, constructionist, and critical theory qualitative researchers employ theoretical or purposive, and not random, sampling models”. Glaser and Strauss (1967:45) discuss such sampling arguing that:

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory...[and]...initial decisions are not based on a preconceived theoretical framework

For Glaser and Strauss (1967:48) theoretical sampling involves seeking out groups, settings, and individuals where the processes being studied are most likely to occur as opposed to “data collected according to a preplanned routine”. For these researchers the importance of this approach to sampling is to generate theory as opposed to verifying “facts”. Furthermore, Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize the importance of constant comparison among groups, concepts, and observations in order to develop an understanding of the case under investigation. For Glaser and Strauss (1967:49)

The researcher chooses any groups that will help generate, to the fullest extent, as many properties of the categories to each other as possible...

For these researchers and myself included it is important to seek out groups, settings, and individuals where the processes being studied are most likely to occur and to constantly make comparisons among groups, concepts, and observations in developing an understanding of the process or case being studied. Additionally a focus on negative cases is an important component and it includes the examination of the case or individual(s) who appear to be the exceptions in the research. The researcher must explore these cases thoroughly enough to understand the differences and incorporate them into their understanding (the model) or the study, which provides the flexibility and variation needed to strengthen a qualitative study or grounded theory model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Patton (1990:169) provides further discussion about the rationale of such sampling:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research... The purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study.

The schools, teachers, principals, and students were purposefully selected in order to obtain rich data about the actual implementation of the language policy and the problems that are encountered in this implementation because it is in the classroom that the policy is ultimately implemented or not. The other informants, those knowledgeable and involved in language policy issues in South Africa, were also chosen in order to obtain information on how and why the policy developed as it did. This included those who have been part of the policy developments, specifically Neville Alexander and Zubeida Desai. Their knowledge and insights have provided information that was not available through the analysis of documents, for example. The Department officials were chosen for their ability to illuminate the specific details in relation to the Department of Education, providing information from their intermediate position that is between policy and practice. In addition, I was also able to secure a discussion with the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) Dr. B. S. Ngubane who was able to highlight a number of political issues concerning the language policy. In May 2002 the Minister of DACST, Dr. Ben Ngubane, was in Norway and met with a group of researchers from various universities and institutions in Norway. I was one of the 19 researchers present during this roundtable discussion with the Minister. The meeting was set up by the international office at the University of Oslo and it took place in the administration building at the University. The meeting was specifically designed to give researchers the opportunity to discuss a number of issues with the Minister, and this allowed me the opportunity to ask particular questions regarding the LiEP. Finally, various staff members at UWC and UCT were selected in order to get a better picture of what is being done at the University level concerning the African languages, the LiEP and other related issues. Thus purposeful sampling was chosen in an attempt to achieve a rich and in-depth understanding of the questions under study. All those chosen had something different to contribute to the understanding of the implementation of the language policy and this in turn allowed me to get several perspectives on the phenomenon.

5.4.3 School selection and site information

The fieldwork consisted of two extensive periods in the field in order to gain an in-depth perspective into the society. The fieldwork periods were first a seven-month period from the beginning of September 2001 until the end of March 2002, where the majority of data collection took place. This was followed by an eight-month period in Norway where the data

was further scrutinized and followed up by a one-year period, from December 2002 until December 2003, in which additional data collection took place combined with the final writing-up phase. Thus in total one year and seven months was spent in the field.

Given that lower level implementation is found in more than one classroom, including more than one classroom in this study was seen as useful to establish if the patterns identified in one class are also found in other classrooms. If these patterns were discovered in other classrooms then these additional classes also provide support for the analysis. Therefore in total three different schools, SC1, SC2 and SC3, which included one classroom in each school, were selected for the project. In SC2 there were two occasions where I had arrived at the school only to find out that the teacher was ill and on these two occasions I observed one of the other Grade 4 classrooms instead and this information is included in my observation notes. Furthermore, given that the teacher and the students had already had some contact with me, I had been already working at the school for some months, made my presence in the classroom more natural, as I was already seen as part of the school. Only three schools were chosen given that I was the sole researcher I believed that I would not have been able to adequately handle more schools. Initially there were three schools involved in the project. However, due to teacher illness in one of the original schools (SC1) observations became impossible and as a result less time was spent gathering data at this particular school. However, the research results also include, to some extent, information gathered in this school as this data was seen as important. The schools were located in three different townships¹¹⁵ in Cape Town, South Africa. It was not a specific intention to include schools in different townships, but rather it was the willingness of these schools to participate in the project that was the determining factor. One of the three schools was not originally identified as a research site as previously noted, but it was included in the project as a result of further discussions with the circuit manager for one of the other schools. The school itself also expressed its desire to participate in the research. School sites were selected according to the following criteria:

- Only public or state schools were considered.
- Given that the project focuses on the transition from an African language to a foreign medium only those schools initially using African languages as medium of instruction were considered.
- In general, schools using African languages are located within townships (including informal settlements) in urban areas or in rural communities. Thus the townships in the Greater Cape Town area were seen as more accessible because

¹¹⁵ The townships were Khayelitsha, Crossroads (also known as Old Crossroads) and New Crossroads.

working in rural communities would have entailed considerable travel on the part of the researcher.

- Willingness of the schools and teachers concerned to participate in the research.

All three schools had the following comparative features: public schools, low socio-economic status in the community where the schools were located, predominantly Xhosa speaking population (both teachers and students), located in the greater Cape Town area. Only one class in each school was selected for observations, as I wanted to establish a rapport with the teachers and the students in the class and felt that by focusing my attention, over a longer period of time, in one classroom¹¹⁶ this objective would be achieved. This proved to be a wise choice as a good relationship developed between the classroom teachers and myself and resulted in the teachers providing me with assistance in my research – which served as an empowering experience for the teachers. As for the students, I believe that I was able to develop a closer and more trusting relationship over the period of time and I believe this allowed them to speak more freely about their experiences during the in-depth interviews. Additionally, I feel that given the history of segregation and oppression in South Africa the students required an extended period of time to develop an understanding that I was not a threat, but rather I was someone who could be trusted and I believe this was facilitated by the extended time spent in each classroom. Moreover, I contend that had I attempted to focus on too many classes at the same time the rapport that resulted between me, the teachers and the students may not have developed.

The choice of classrooms in each school was left to the discretion of the school's principal. In each school the principal discussed the issues with the entire Grade 4 teaching staff and ultimately the Grade 4 teachers in cooperation with the principals in each school had the final decision over which class would participate in the study. For me it was important that I was accepted by the teachers and not forced upon them, therefore, leaving the decision in their hands gave me a sense that the teachers, to some degree, invited me into their classroom. Thus the classroom samples involved purposeful sampling in that they provided *information-rich cases* (Patton, 1990:169), which provided the opportunity to learn a great deal about the central purpose of the study (the realities of implementing the LiEP). However, the samples may be even further defined as a combination approach or mixed purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990:181) “because research and evaluations often serve multiple purposes, more

¹¹⁶ As mentioned there were two occasions where the teacher was absent in SC2 and since I had already arrived at the school I conducted observations for those two days in one of the other Grade 4 classrooms.

than one qualitative sampling strategy may be necessary...” and in long-term fieldwork a multitude of sampling “strategies may be used at some point”. Thus the sampling strategy that was used has been “selected to fit the design of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked, and the constraints being faced” (Patton, 1990:181-183).

As the criteria for selection have been discussed, I now present a brief description¹¹⁷ of each of the schools involved in this investigation. However, before beginning it is important to note that all three schools are former DET (Department of Education and Training) schools otherwise known as ex-DET schools. The DET served as the department of education for black pupils until the April 1994 elections, until it became known as the ‘ex-DET’ and schools under this department began being referred to as ‘ex-DET’ schools. Additionally, there was also the House of Representatives (HOR) for coloureds, where after 1994 their schools became ‘ex-HOR’ schools, and the Indians were served by the House of Delegates (HOD), whose schools then became ‘ex-HOD’ schools (cf 2.2.1 for a detailed explanation of the elaborate educational system that was put into place during the apartheid era).

SCI is a school staffed by Xhosa mother tongue speakers and attended by mainly Xhosa speaking pupils (720 out of 726 for the 2002 school year) with five Sotho speakers and one Venda speaking student. For the most part the school is linguistically homogenous and there is no language barrier between teachers and learners. The school is located in the Khayelitsha Township, one of the largest townships in the country and located on the outskirts of Cape Town. There is formal housing on one side of the school and a large informal settlement located on the other end of the school. The extreme poverty of many of the learners is evident as there is a lack of uniforms or the uniforms are in very poor condition and a lack of pencils and other stationery items. There is a feeding scheme at the school. Many of the students live in shacks and unemployment¹¹⁸ in this area is extremely high, leading to a high prevalence of crime. During the 2001 and 2002 academic years there were two classes at Grade 4. I focused my observations on one of these classes only, as mentioned earlier this was due to constraints of being a sole researcher and to develop rapport with the teacher and the students (this is the same justification for choosing only one classroom in the other two schools as well). The

¹¹⁷ See 5.6.2 for a discussion concerning the description of these schools in relation to anonymity and validity.

¹¹⁸ According to the 1996 Census, unemployment in Khayelitsha was estimated to be nearly 70% (this information was extracted by the Urban Policy of Strategic Information and was sent to me via email by Janet Gie).

NGO Scientific and Industrial Leadership Initiative (SAILI)¹¹⁹ which is concerned with improving the standard of Mathematics and Science teaching and providing access to English has recently (in the 2003 academic year) become involved in the school providing regular workshops for the teachers as well as some learning materials.

SC2 is located in a predominantly Xhosa-speaking African township of New Crossroads (cf 2.2.3.1 for a discussion of this township). Xhosa mother tongue speakers make up the majority of the staff with one Zulu-speaking principal in the 2001 and 2002 academic year. This principal has since left the school and is being temporally replaced by a Xhosa mother tongue speaker. The school is located in the center of a formal housing area with informal settlements located further out from the school. Again in this area there is also a high rate of unemployment and the crime rate here is also very high. There is extreme violence in the area. The school is plagued by continued thefts, vandalism, and assaults by gangs in the area. This has resulted in doors being missing, books destroyed or stolen along with much of the needed equipment to run the school. Here the majority of students are also Xhosa mother tongue speakers (851 out of 853) and two Zulu-speaking learners. As in SC1 the poverty of the learners is also evident, however, less severe than in SC1 with some students having backpacks or other school bags to carry their books and stationery. In this school there are three Grade 4 classes. The observations were being conducted, for the most part, in one classroom only. In this school the majority of the observations were conducted in one class. As mentioned, there were two occasions I observed one of the other classes instead. The information collected on these two occasions was recorded in my observation notes and forms part of my data. The school grounds are very neat with a large grass area, not meant for playing, and a large concrete area where students generally play during breaks.

SC3 is also located in a predominantly Xhosa-speaking community known as Crossroads or Old Crossroads (cf 2.1.3.1). The school is in the middle of an informal settlement with only a few formal houses to one side. The school building was never designed as a school, but a community center and thus the classrooms are extremely small and in poor condition. The walls in many classrooms are nonexistent or are falling down (literally). The Department has

¹¹⁹ In February 2003 I interviewed SAILI's executive director, Robert Gow-Kleinschmidt, who informed me that SAILI is funded by the Gatsby Charitable foundation Trust. Their main focus is on mathematics and science with some focus on initial literacy in the mother tongue (the first three years of primary education) followed by a transition to English.

promised for a number of years¹²⁰ to build a new school and finally during the writing of this dissertation in South Africa the new school was being built, and they were scheduled to move into the new building in November of 2003. As in the other two schools high unemployment and crime are serious problems, which the students and staff must deal with on a daily basis. The entire staff consists of Xhosa mother tongue speakers. Likewise the majority of students also have Xhosa as their mother tongue (1012 out of 1026). There are, however, 11 Sotho speaking learners, one Zulu and two Tswana speakers. Here there are four Grade 4 classes (in the 2003 academic year the number of Grade 4 classrooms was reduced to three). Observations were conducted in one of them. The school was also one of the first schools to work with the NGO SAILI and workshops are regularly held with the staff. These they noted as being very useful. Finally, this school is the only one of the three schools that had a female principal; the other two had male principals.

For all three schools the majority of staff is female. In the student population there are a few more males than females (cf table 5.2).

Table 5.2: School demographics

SCHOOL NAME	YEAR	LEARNERS			EDUCATORS		
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
SC1	2003	372 (50.8%)	360 (49.2%)	732	7 (33.3%)	14 (66.7%)	21
	2002	377 (51.9%)	349 (48.1%)	726	7 (36.8%)	12 (63.2%)	19
	2001	383 (53.5%)	333 (46.5%)	716	7 (33.3%)	14 (66.7%)	21
SC2	2003	431 (51.5%)	405 (48.5%)	836	5 (21.7%)	18 (78.3%)	23
	2002	433 (50.8%)	420 (49.2%)	853	5 (20.0%)	20 (80.0%)	25
	2001	445 (49.3%)	458 (50.7%)	903	6 (22.2%)	21 (77.8%)	27
SC3	2003	568 (52.9%)	506 (47.1%)	1074	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)	32
	2002	554 (54.0%)	472 (46.0%)	1026	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)	32
	2001	547 (51.5%)	514 (48.5%)	1061	6 (15.8%)	32 (84.2%)	38

(Source: Education Ministry Information Service (EMIS), 2002)

To give a clearer picture of the linguistic¹²¹ composition for the schools as discussed above, the language profile for the 2002 academic year is as follows (Table 5.3):

¹²⁰ This school has been in its current location since it began in 1993.

¹²¹ It is important to note that Xhosa and Zulu speaking people understand each other without any problem. This became evident during one afternoon when I was having lunch at UWC with one of my Xhosa speaking colleagues. During lunch we were joined by a student who began to speak to my colleague in what I thought was Xhosa. I asked this student if he was from the Eastern Cape (where the majority of Xhosa speakers live), but he said no, he was from KwaZulu-Natal and that he was speaking Zulu and my colleague was speaking Xhosa, but

Table 5.3: Language profile of schools for 2002

School	LOLT* Grade 1-3	LOLT Grade 4-7	Language profile of learners (whole school): home language					Language profile of teachers (whole school): home language
			Xhosa	Zulu	Sotho	Tswana	Venda	Xhosa
SC1	Xhosa	English	720 (99.2%)		5 (0.7%)		1 (0.1%)	19 (100%)
SC2	Xhosa	English	851 (99.8%)	2 (0.2%)				25 (100%)
SC3	Xhosa	English	1012 (98.6%)	1 (0.1%)	11 (1.1%)	2 (0.2%)		32 (100%)

(Source: Education Ministry Information Service (EMIS), 2002)

*Key: LOLT= Language of Learning and Teaching

It is important to note that although the schools participating in the investigation were not in a state of extreme disrepair as, for example, many schools in the Eastern Cape and other rural areas, they are still not comparable to ex-Model C schools, for example.¹²² The schools in which I carried out my investigation did not have any of the most serious types of deprivation cited in the School Register of Needs (often found in more rural areas such as the Eastern Cape), which include a lack of water or electricity at the school. Even so, the majority of ex-DET schools experience a severe lack of funds and some also show signs of serious neglect, for example, broken windows, missing doors, flaking paint, walls falling down (as discussed in relation to one of the schools above), doors without handles, leaking roofs and so on. There is also a serious lack of stationery such as pencils, pens, erasers, writing books because the Department supplies only a few per learner and as a result learners are forced to use the same exercise books for several subjects. In addition, teaching aids are nonexistent, for instance overhead projectors, flip charts, maps, and audio-visual materials (for example, tape recorders, televisions, video recorders and so on), not to mention that these schools do not have a library or even supplementary reading material in addition to a severe shortage of textbooks (many of these things are found in ex-Model C schools in addition to high-tech computer facilities and additional teachers). Only SC2 has a library, which is not in use. The library consists of a large number of donated books all of which are in English only and irrelevant for the students. Many of the books are about the British Monarchy or the UK. Also the library is not in use because the teacher in charge does not have the necessary supplies to

that they understood each other without any problem. Brock-Utne (2000a:194) describes a similar experience during a visit to Namibia with reference to the Otjiherero and Oshikwanyama languages and Baily (1995) notes some similarities even between Southern Sotho and Zulu, which are from different language groups.

¹²² The description here is similar as that discussed by Plüddemann, Mati and Mahlalela-Thusi (2000) in their description of ex-DET schools. Thus the conditions in these schools appear to be very similar throughout the Western Cape.

register all the books and get the library in working order to allow students and staff to check out books. However, when a group of Tanzanian researchers visited the schools in April 2003 in connection with the LOITASA¹²³ project they were impressed by the material standards of the schools, but shocked by the bad living conditions in the informal settlements. Meerkotter (2003:40) highlights this in his description of the South African context:

The gap between the reality of what life has to offer for the majority of our citizens and what schools could provide, is increasingly proving to be unbridgeable...it is ludicrous to expect of those who come out of shacks without running water, electricity or sanitation, braving cold and wet winters and do not have one decent meal per day to cope with the demands of formal schooling – even if the school building is three storeys [*sic*] high, modern and brand new. What meaning could such a building...have for the students and their (in many instances) unemployed parents?

Moreover, Meerkotter (2003:40) continues that in addition to the poverty he describes above the language of instruction stands out as the “most significant obstacle to meaningful school learning”.

Furthermore, this is enhanced by the fact that some of the learners’ home background (i.e. low socio-economic status) results in the lack of parents’ ability to provide extra materials and/or even proper school uniforms. Moreover, many of these parents are unable to pay school fees or they can only pay very low school fees. The three schools where this research was conducted had school fees of 20 Rand per year whereas ex-Model C schools charge anywhere from 350 Rand per month or more with private schools charging tens of thousands per year. The result is as one of my informants mentioned an economic apartheid as opposed to a symbolic one. The result being that the township schools must function with the limited funds they receive from the Department as opposed to many ex-Model C schools where parents are able to pay higher school fees thus allowing these schools the ability to provide, for example, computers, overhead projectors, laboratories, copying machines, learner support materials, funds to go on excursions and even extra teachers for their students. In short, ex-DET schools must then simply do without many of these same things.

¹²³ LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) is a NUFU (Norwegian University Fund) funded project and involves both a research component as well as staff development in Tanzania and South Africa (cf chapter 1 for more details).

5.4.3.1 Entering the field

It was the beginning of September 2001 when I entered the first of my three research sites located in the Khayelitsha Township. As I drove along the N2 highway past the residential area of Heideveld (defined as a colored area under apartheid) and the townships of Guguletu, Nyanga and Crossroads, where the majority of the residents are black, I began to get a glimpse of the miserable conditions and the utter injustice of the environment that would serve as the physical setting of my fieldwork for the next seven months. Khayelitsha meaning 'New Town' is similar to the other urban townships where my fieldwork took place. It too was planned by the apartheid government of the 1980s in response to the growing influx of people from the Eastern Cape, which caused severe overcrowding in the older townships of Crossroads, the other research locations.

All three townships, Khayelitsha, Crossroads and New Crossroads, are far removed from the center of Cape Town and access to the suburbs, a very apparent intent of the apartheid design of segregation. As I drove along the N2 the flow from one township into another along the sandy and arid stretches along the Cape Flats was certainly a stark contrast to the lush green suburbs I passed through along the way. The shacks that run along the side of the N2 highway opposite the airport serve as a dismal reminder of the harsh living conditions of many of these township residents.

As I drove into the townships I noticed the hustle and bustle on the streets and of people everywhere, I noticed the loud noises coming from the spazas¹²⁴ set up by many of the residents, and I passed the area where people are selling grilled meat by the roadside and where street vendors sit in the hot summer sun selling their goods. As I navigated my way through the neighborhoods I noticed the large number of people wandering around as if there were not much to keep them occupied. This served as a constant reminder of the high unemployment in the townships. The violence and poverty must be difficult for the township residents to endure, but for me it was only a temporary situation. As I entered this 'foreign' environment I was also marked by my whiteness. I noticed over the months that very few white South Africans¹²⁵ travel into the townships. The almost total lack of commerce and

¹²⁴ A spaza is a local term for a home-based or pavement shop.

¹²⁵ Having lived in South Africa during the fieldwork period and the writing of this dissertation I became acquainted with many South Africans of all backgrounds, both within the townships and outside of them. Furthermore, there were many white South Africans who confided that they had never been to the townships and

formal business is also very apparent. There are some centers where the bank, the post office and a few formal stores are located. The remainder is a mixture of informal spazas and street vendors.

Table 5.4: Demographics of the townships

Township	Population	Primary schools	High schools
Khayelitsha ¹²⁶	450,000-600,000	37	16
Crossroads	23,459	2	2
New Crossroads	13,526	3	NA

It is clear from the numbers that Khayelitsha is by far the largest of the townships. There is also another section in Crossroads known as Lower Crossroads that has 1 primary school and thus in total 8 schools (6 primary and 2 high schools) are located in the Crossroads area. However, my investigation did not include Lower Crossroads as I was limited in my ability, as a single researcher, to cover more than three schools. Also the school in Lower Crossroads, as mentioned earlier, had a new principal and both the Circuit Manager and I felt it would be difficult to have the added pressure of having a researcher present and for this reason I did not consider this school.

I would now like to turn my discussion to the actual data collection process and begin with the observations conducted.

5.4.4 Observations

Observations were chosen as a way of determining what takes place inside the classrooms as those involved attempt to implement the LiEP. As contemporary ethnographic research may be characterized more as “collaborative” research the “subjects” of the research are viewed as

could not understand how and why I would travel in and out of the townships everyday. I do admit that there were days where it was difficult, especially when encountering the high crime in these areas and having almost been a victim myself. I do, however, think it is important that as part of an ethnographic study I needed to experience this aspect, which has obviously affected me as a researcher and a person, but which has also allowed me to understand some of the difficulties faced by the residents of these townships.

¹²⁶ The population figures were provided to me by the Urban Policy of Strategic Information and were a result of Census 1996. However, this office informed me that the population figures for Kayelitsha are believed to be much higher than estimated in the 1996 Census, which suggested that the population was only 251,210. Thus 450,000-600,000 is believed to be a more realistic figure. Additionally the figures quoted for the other two townships are taken from Census 1996, which may suggest that the population for both Old and New Crossroads is much higher, but the Urban Policy Unit did not have other figures available for these two townships.

collaborative partners. To achieve this it was important to enter into a relationship with the members of the group in this study and through participant observations this goal was reached. Although the definition of *participant observation* has not necessarily been a controversial issue the meaning can be difficult to pin down (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). In some cases a distinction is drawn between participant and non-participant observations with the difference between the two being somewhat unclear. Atkinson and Hammersley (1998:111) suggest a fourfold typology: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant. Moreover, it has been argued that, in reality, *all* social research is a form of participant observation, as we cannot study the social world without being part of that world (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:104-108). As such this investigation made use of participant observations, which allowed me the opportunity to be tuned into both the everyday realities of the classroom and the motivations and capabilities of ordinary teachers (Vulliamy, 1990) as well as the learners. The distinction between participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant can be seen as connected to taking on an existing role in the setting and generally relates more to the participant-as-observer, but the distinction between these two roles can be questioned and perhaps “no hard-and-fast distinction can be made” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:108). Although I did not take on any existing role in the schools at the time, as suggested for a participant-as-observer or observer-as-participant role (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), I did take on a typical role found in many classrooms and certainly a role that is often found in these three schools at one time or another when they have teacher trainees working in the schools. Marshall and Rossman (1989:79-81) believe that “some sort of participation usually becomes necessary as the researcher helps out with small chores (or large ones), wants to learn more about a particular activity, or feels compelled to participate to meet the demands of reciprocity”. For me it was important that I gave something back to the teachers and their students and this was facilitated by serving as a teacher’s assistant. In this way I helped by checking workbooks, passing out papers, helping students with lessons and so on. Furthermore, it is argued that ethnographic methods rely chiefly on participant observation.

In discussing the issue of observations van Lier (1988:39) notes the following, which is similar to Blichfeldt’s (1973:12) account¹²⁷ of conducting classroom research:

¹²⁷ I cite from van Lier (1988) here as Blichfeldt’s (1973) account is in Norwegian. However, the description by both researchers is somewhat similar. Moreover, van Lier’s description concerns research in a L2 language classroom, which has similar, yet not identical, characteristics to the classrooms in this investigation.

Most learners and teachers in L2 classes are very familiar with the phenomenon of the observer. In the best of possible scenarios, they have come to accept and largely ignore the presence of a person in the back of the room scribbling away and trying to blend into the woodwork. Learners, for whom the L2 classroom after all is a public stage, by and large take such visits in their stride after a while. The teacher, on the other hand may well find the presence vaguely threatening, and conduct lessons differently because of it. This in turn will have some effect on the learners, so that an observer may never be able to observe a natural, undisturbed lesson.

What van Lier (1988) is describing is referred to as the *observer's paradox* (Labov, 1972). Labov (1972:209) argues that “the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation”. Thus the observer's paradox refers to difficulties encountered in trying to observe natural/typical/normal behavior. That is, the observed are liable to change their behavior simply because they are being observed, such that their behavior ceases to be natural/normal/typical. However, as Blichfeldt (1973:12) notes, although some teachers may feel particularly constrained in their activities at first, after a relatively short time, the majority of teachers and students tend to forget the presence of the researcher. Brock-Utne (1981) describes her experiences when conducting observations in three different schools in Norway. In her discussion, Brock-Utne (1981:170) notes that teachers reacted differently towards the presence of researchers in their classrooms with “one asking how long we had thought to be in the classroom so that she could prepare the lesson accordingly. Another teacher was irritated when we did not come as planned as she had prepared a special lesson”. However, Brock-Utne (1981:170) contends, “it was a *normal* lesson that we sought to observe, but the teachers wanted to prepare something special because they were going to be observed”. Obviously the observer effect is very real in some cases, particularly when researchers are in a classroom for only short periods at a time. However, by conducting an intensive ethnographic study I spent entire days during two terms in the three schools partly in an attempt to reduce this effect. I divided the weeks up during the term so that I spent a minimum of 1-2 days in each school per week and rotated the days so that observations were made in the schools on different days. Moreover, I spent 5 days per week (Monday-Friday) in the schools for the two terms. Thus in total more than 220 hours were spent conducting observations. As a result both the teachers and the students quickly forgot about my presence after a short while, resulting in *normal* lessons taking place. Furthermore, as time progressed I became more than a mere observer in the classrooms. I became more than what Brock-Utne (1981) describes as the Australian in the class (or

research tourist- someone who is present in the class only for a very short time as opposed to an extended period of time). I also became a participant in the classrooms serving as an assistant to the teachers – something that I believed enhanced the normality of my presence.

The school observations were conducted in the fourth term of the 2001 school year and then again in the first term of the 2002 school year. The observations took place in a total of three Grade 4 classrooms in three different schools (as noted on two occasions in SC2 I observed another class). The number of teachers observed on a regular basis was four (in SC3 there were two teachers that taught in the class). However, with the reading comprehension that was given to the students on November 7th and 8th 2001 I observed an additional four teachers during this lesson only.

In addition to conducting all the observations myself I also transcribed and analyzed all the observational data along with the interviews. This allowed me the ability to constantly review and analyze the data collected (cf 5.4 for more details). Observation notes were taken during the actual participant observations as I had a small desk set up for me in the back of the classrooms (in SC3 I sat in a chair in the corner of the room by the blackboard as this classroom had no other space available). During periods where I was assisting the teachers notes were made immediately afterwards and always while I was still in the classroom so that the details of the whole episode would not be lost. In taking notes I was interested in capturing the social process and their context and thus included even information that I did not immediately understand in the event that these might turn out to be important later (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). All the interview tapes were kept by me and these were transcribed soon after each interview to allow for initial analysis of each one.

During the observation period I was able to observe at least one lesson in all the subject areas. The subject areas most observed were *Mathematics*, *English* and *Xhosa (Language, Literacy and Communication)*. These were followed by *Natural Science* and *Social Science with Life Orientation* and *Arts and Culture* only being observed once during the seven-month period. This is also in line with the recommendations made by the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 where it is suggested “more time [should be] allocated to the ‘gateway’ learning areas [and where] particular attention should be given to the development of effective literacy and foundational mathematical skills” (DoE, 2000a:11). Thus *Languages* should receive 30% of

the timetable followed by 20% for *Mathematics* and 15% each for *Social-* and *Natural Sciences* followed by 8% for *Life Orientation* and finally 7% for *Arts and Culture*.

5.4.5 Fieldwork procedures

Keeping fieldnotes is a way of reporting observations, reflections and reactions in the classroom under investigation. Furthermore fieldnotes may be written in different ways. They may be “issue oriented” with observations being focused on a particular aspect of teaching or classroom behavior. Malinowski (1922:9) warns about the dangers of conducting ethnographic research in order to “prove a certain hypothesis” and suggests rather that a researcher begin with a *foreshadowed problem*, which allows for more flexibility in recording observations. Thus it is suggested that structured observations with preconceived categories should not be utilized, but rather a more open and flexible approach should be used (Malinowski, 1922).

Blichfeldt (1973) suggests an open approach to recording classroom observations that allows for a number of issues to be recorded, which were not considered beforehand. Brock-Utne (1981:172) tells how, in a research project that she conducted, some of the researchers began with a structured observation schedule, but it was soon discovered that they were unable to collect the necessary data and thus replaced it with a research journal instead.

Influenced by the actual experiences of Blichfeldt and Brock-Utne, I made use of a research journal method allowing me to describe the overall impressions of the situation being observed. My approach for writing up my observations follows the principles elaborated by Brock-Utne (1981:174) in which she simply gives the following suggestions:

1. Write only on one side of the page so that the pages can be cut up and pasted together. This allows for the same types of observations to be combined making analysis easier.
2. Divide the pages into two by a line. On one side write down the concrete observations and on the opposite side write down the interpretations, assumptions, instant impressions – immediately after the observations (or observation period).

Although Brock-Utne was making these suggestions in the early 1980s, when the use of computers was not the norm, her advice to use only one side of the page was still relevant as I used the back of the pages for additional notes later, which were useful in my further analysis

(cf 5.4 for the discussion of analysis). Also it was less obtrusive sitting in the back of the classrooms with a notebook and pencil in hand than it would have been to sit there with, for example, a laptop computer typing away in classrooms that were in a state of despair and where you were never sure what you would meet each day (for example, no electricity or severe weather conditions that forced one to sit where the rain was not coming in). Needless to say, my own safety was also a concern and I was less likely to be the target of a robbery carrying a notebook and pencil everyday as opposed to expensive computer equipment. Furthermore, the flexibility of my method allowed me to make adjustments for unexpected events and to tune my observations to new phenomena as opposed to predetermined and rigid categories. Malinowski (1922) discusses the importance of carrying a research diary (or research journal) for taking observation notes and highlights the importance of collecting information and *fixing impressions* (initial analysis) early in the course of the investigation. By using the research journal as discussed above I was able to collect the important data early in the form of concrete observations (CO notes) and begin my initial analysis through the use of notes labeled interpretations (CI notes). In this way my analysis began while I was conducting my fieldwork and this allowed me the opportunity to refocus new observations as a result of this initial analysis.

5.4.6 Interviews

Interviews were chosen as a way to focus on the policy and how it developed and the implementation of the policy at the classroom level. As previously mentioned, interviewees were purposefully selected in order that they could illuminate different aspects concerning the implementation of the language policy. During some of the interviews I received information about other informants who might be able to illuminate certain aspects better. Thus this type of sampling represents what Patton (1990) refers to as *snowball or chain sampling*, an approach used for locating information-rich key informants. As a result the number of informants became larger and larger as the initial informants suggested others whom I should talk with.

In total 24 in-depth semi-formal interviews were conducted in the investigation (cf appendix B for a sample of the interview guides). Only the interview guides for the teachers and students are included in the appendix. However, other interview guides were similar. These

interview guides served as an outline of the type of questions asked, while some questions may have been added others might not have been asked. The result was a more flexible and open-ended approach to interviewing as opposed to predetermined and rigid questioning. One of the strengths in qualitative research lies in its flexibility and openness. Furthermore, the strength of the informal or flexible and open-ended interview is that it allows the interviewer “to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes” (Patton, 1990:282). The interviewees were again chosen for their knowledge in the area of study and thus gender was not an issue. The in-depth interviews consisted of a total of: six learners, eight teachers, two school principals, two ministry officials, three language policy experts, two NGO officials and one Minister of Parliament. Furthermore, a number of informal interviews and/or conversations took place with various people (for example, teachers, students, parents, principals, department officials, NGOs and Embassy representatives, etc.) during the almost two-year period spent in Cape Town and this information was recorded in a research diary, which also served as a source of data. Although the majority of the data was collected during the initial seven-month period (from September 2001-March 2002) I collected additional information during the final writing up period of this dissertation, which took place in Cape Town. This allowed me the ability to verify and collect information that was either unclear or lacking.

The quality and duration of the interviews vary. Some informants are referred to more than others in the presentation of results, simply because more information was received. The variation in the quality of interviews can be explained by the different personalities of the respondents as well as their knowledge of the issue at hand. Also the willingness of the interviewees to share their feelings and opinions varied. Furthermore, the interviews taken later on in the study were more focused as I gained more insight and knowledge about the phenomenon. The interviews are then seen as part of a learning process whereby the interviewer learns how to ask more focused questions and how to interpret the answers as the issues become clearer. This resulted in some of the later interviews being more relevant than those taken earlier on. Also not all the interviews were tape-recorded and thus the ability of the interviewer to note all the information varied (this was relevant to the conversations or informal interviews that often took place both inside and outside of the classrooms). Therefore, the tape-recorded interviews in some instances gave more information than those recorded by hand. However, it is noted that in those interviews that were not tape-recorded the atmosphere was more relaxed and as a result the respondents may have been more candid in

their responses as these resembled more of a conversation. The information gathered from these conversations were transcribed immediately afterwards in my research diary.

Finally, the majority of the interviews were conducted in English. However, when interviewing students this was not possible as their knowledge of English was significantly low and, therefore, an interpreter was used (cf 5.3.1).

5.4.7 The reading comprehension task

The reading comprehension task was chosen to help demonstrate through more conventional methods how students perform when exposed to a lesson involving different language circumstances along with focusing on tests in general that were observed to be so prevalent in the classrooms. Through the use of this structured performance situation I was able to analyze the results and to yield numerical scores, from which inferences were made about how individuals differed in the various language circumstances (Gall et al., 1996). In November 2001 I gave a reading comprehension task to a total of 278 students in the three schools SC1, SC2, and SC3. The comprehension task was originally designed in English¹²⁸ (cf appendix C) (Ellis & Murray, 2000:138-140) and then subsequently translated into Xhosa (cf appendix D). The comprehension task consisted of a picture with a short story followed by a set of both multiple choice and open-ended questions, which the students were supposed to answer afterwards. Although this comprehension task may be described as an “unfair task” and highly questionable, it is also seen as a “typical task” that the students are exposed to. In general, the students are exposed to such tests/tasks consisting of multiple-choice questions; however, to get a better picture of their ability to provide information using their own words I changed part of the task to include some open-ended questions in addition to the multiple-choice questions. Moreover, the task was taken from an existing Grade 4 text used in schools and it was discussed with the teachers beforehand in order to get their reaction to the lesson. In fact, the teachers found the task very relevant to what they were currently focusing on and in this way students were not being required to work with something completely new.

¹²⁸ The reading comprehension task was taken from a Grade 4 English book entitled *Let's Use English*. The book (for L2 language learners) was published by Heinemann and written by Rod Ellis and Sarah Murray. Permission to use this reading comprehension task and to reproduce it in appendix C was obtained from Heinemann. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the publisher for allowing me to make use of this material.

The comprehension task was given in SC2 and SC3 in English, Xhosa and in what is termed the “code-switching” method (thus English and Xhosa were both used). In SC1 only the English only version was given, while in SC2 and SC3 the comprehension task was given to three different classes using three different teaching methods:

1. English only instruction with questions and the story being provided in English only.
2. Xhosa only instruction with questions and the story provided in Xhosa only.
3. English/Xhosa “code-switching” where the lesson was taught using both languages, which is the normal way most lessons are taught in these schools. The test questions and the story were then in English only, which is also the normal way tests and examinations are given in these schools.

The only instruction given to the teachers was on the language to be used (LOT- Language of teaching) and no instruction was given on how to teach the lesson. Each teacher was free to teach the lesson as they would normally teach a comprehension lesson; this was done in order to get a more realistic picture of students’ performance, with the focus being on the language used and not the teachers’ own teaching methods. As a result, three teachers (1 teacher in each of the three schools SC1, SC2 and SC3) received instructions to teach the lesson in English only, two teachers (one teacher in SC2 and one teacher in SC3) were told to use only Xhosa and two teachers (one teacher in SC2 and one teacher in SC3) were instructed to teach the lesson as they normally would with both teachers using English and Xhosa (code mixing and code switching) to teach the lesson. Additionally, all the lessons were videotaped except the one in SC1 and these tapes were further analyzed and served as additional data. I was present for and videotaped all the lessons, which were subsequently translated by a Xhosa-speaking colleague from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Vuyokazi Nomlomo. This allowed me the opportunity to further analyze the data, particularly the code alternation that took place. As mentioned the lesson in SC1 was not videotaped, as I had not originally planned to conduct the lesson in this school since the teacher had often been absent due to illness and this made planning observations in this class difficult. Therefore, this school was only observed in the initial phase of data collection (for two months only). During a follow-up visit to the school I met with the above-mentioned teacher and she asked if her class could also participate in this lesson, as she was “curious to see how my students would do in an English only lesson”. Given the specific request I made arrangements to have the lesson in English only the following day, but because of short notice I was unable to arrange to have the lesson videotaped as the video camera was unavailable that day. Therefore, during this lesson I took very careful notes recording the time the lesson began and ended and any other

information that seemed relevant. Furthermore, in this school there were only two grade four classes and thus it would not have been possible to have all three methods used in this school. In addition, to the short time to prepare I was unable to make arrangements to have the lesson in the other grade four class.

My motive for using the reading comprehension task was to assist my observations through the use of more conventional evaluation tools. Although I do not believe that such tasks reveal everything about the students, they help to highlight what I had been observing during the months spent in the classrooms. Furthermore, my overall motive was not to evaluate teachers' methods or ability, but rather to give a broader picture of the students' ability to understand what takes place both during and after lessons.

In short, the overall objective of the task was to see if the learners in fact understood what the teacher had been trying to teach them (using English only, Xhosa only or the code-switching method) and then have them demonstrate this by answering the questions afterwards. In reviewing the videotapes, an interesting observation was made in that the lessons in which English/Xhosa (code-switching) method was used, the amount of time needed to teach the lesson was more than four times as long as that in which the lessons were taught in Xhosa only and considerably longer than the English only version. This is because much of the information was repeated in Xhosa after having been explained first in English (cf chapter 7 for more information and discussion of this).

The students were required to answer the questions after the completion of the lesson as an individual written exercise (resembling a test format) after which I collected all the written tasks from the students. The tasks were initially graded with the open-ended questions being given one point if the student was able to provide, for the most part, the correct answer. However, the open-ended questions were also given a ½ point if the answer given was not exactly correct, but reasonable. The grading was then discussed with my Xhosa colleagues at UWC and to some extent with the teachers (as they were also assisting me in my research). Thus the marks that were given to the students, initially by me, were discussed with both the colleague at UWC and the teachers so that agreement was reached on the marking, particularly the open-ended questions.

5.5 Analysis

The skills required of a qualitative researcher are, as Strauss and Corbin (1990:18) note, the ability “to step back and critically analyze situations, to recognize and avoid bias, to obtain valid and reliable data, and to think abstractly”. The aim here was to make sense of the social situation.

Sociological fieldwork has been discussed by a number of researchers and for the purpose of this investigation two are particularly relevant, namely Becker (1982)¹²⁹ and Glaser and Strauss (1967). In particular Becker (1982:248) describes four stages in the analysis of fieldwork data:

We can distinguish three distinct stages of analysis conducted in the field itself, and a fourth stage, carried on after completion of the field work. These stages are differentiated, first, by their logical sequence: each succeeding stage depends on some analysis in the preceding stage. They are further differentiated by the fact that different kinds of conclusion are put to different uses in the continuing research. Finally, they are differentiated by the different criteria that are used to assess evidence and to reach conclusions in each stage. The three stages of field analysis are: the selection and definition of problems, concepts, and indices; the check on the frequency and distribution of phenomena; and the incorporation of individual findings into a model of the organisation under study. The fourth stage of final analysis involves problems of presentation of evidence and proof.

In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967:105) describe analysis in a similar fashion when discussing the concept of the constant comparative method used in grounded theory as a way to analyze sociological data:

We shall describe in four stages the constant comparative method; 1. comparing incidents applicable to each category, 2. integrating categories and their properties, 3. delimiting the theory, and 4. writing the theory. Although this method of generating theory is a continuously growing process – each stage after a time is transformed into the next – earlier stages do remain in operation simultaneously throughout the analysis and each provides continuous development to its successive stage until the analysis is terminated.

¹²⁹ This article was originally published in 1958 in *American Sociological Review* (cf reference list for details).

In grounded theory the constant comparative method, proposed by Glaser and Strauss, is clearly a more dynamic concept than the linear stages suggested by Becker. However, there are similarities in these two approaches in the analysis of field data, namely the use of the four distinct stages:

1. data collection and the initial generation of categories
2. validation of categories
3. interpretation of categories
4. action

These four stages are summarized in table 5.5 and are said to be representative of the practice for the analysis of qualitative field data.

Table 5.5: Fieldwork methodology

Classroom research	Becker	Glaser and Strauss
Data collection	Selection and definition of concepts	Compare incidents applicable to each category
Validation	Frequency and distribution of concepts	Integrate categories and their phenomena
Interpretation	Incorporation of findings into model	Delimit theory
Action	Presentation of evidence and proof	Write theory

Thus having collected the data (cf table 5.1 for overview of data collected), a sub-stage follows immediately (Becker, 1982) or co-exists with the collection of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), referred to as the generation of hypotheses. The term hypothesis is used here more to refer to ideas, thus the term is used more eclectically. This stage may also be referred to as open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990:61) open coding refers to a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data. As noted earlier the system I utilized for taking my observation notes (Brock-Utne, 1981) allowed me the opportunity to name the phenomenon and also to do this sort of open coding immediately after or simultaneously during the observations, with concrete observations on one side of the page and interpretations and instant impressions on the other side. In social science research we are always generating ideas to explain the events we are researching. Thus during the data collection phase I kept notes referred to as concrete

observation (CO) and simultaneously a set comments/interpretation (CI), following up the advice by Brock-Utne (1981:174) previously referenced (cf 5.3.4.1). At the end of the data collection phase not only had I collected the data, but I had also established a number of hypotheses, constructs or categories. The CI notes were then a self-conscious attempt to derive meaning from the several observation notes. In this way I began an initial explanation of what was happening both in the classroom with regard to implementing the LiEP and what was taking place concerning the policy aspect. In short, I began to reflect upon and interpret the data. This helped me to focus my attention more and also assisted me in discovering what questions were important to discuss during subsequent interviews.

The next stage involved the process of validation of the hypotheses or ideas about the social setting under investigation. It is important to note that although these stages appear to follow in succession, they actually overlap with several stages occurring simultaneously (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Here a number of techniques are normally useful in establishing the validity of a category or hypothesis. The use of triangulation is one of the best-known techniques for achieving this (cf 5.2). Another technique known as *saturation* is also widely used. Glaser and Strauss (1967:67) suggest that saturation signifies a situation where “no additional data are being found...[to] develop properties of the category”. Thus when the utility of the observation or series of interviews decreases, saturation can be said to have occurred and/or the hypothesis has been validated. In this sense as time passed (within the second month of the 2002 school year) and no new phenomena were prevalent and, therefore, no additional data were being found, I could conclude that saturation had occurred. The same could be said for the interview data, as no new information was being discovered, saturation had then also occurred (this became apparent as the final interviews were not revealing any new information).

In addition to the saturation and triangulation techniques used, I made use of what Strauss and Corbin (1990:108-109) refer to as looking for *negative cases* where at the same time “we are looking for evidence in the data to verify our statements of relationship, we are also looking for instances of when they might not hold up” (cf 7.4.1.1 for an example). Hence, this was done by looking for instances where classroom observations revealed issues that were not present in the majority of other cases or when interviews revealed information or opinions that differed from the majority of other interviews.

In short, in the initial phase I analyzed the observations, interviews, videotapes, fieldnotes, reading comprehension task, research diary, and various documents. Then I used the analyzed data from these various sources to generate categories or ideas about the social settings, the classrooms. Following the development of these categories or ideas, I validated them in the second phase and in keeping with the suggestions of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) I returned to phase one (although not all the data had been completely analyzed before returning to this stage again) to collect more data. This was an ongoing process of data collection and verification throughout this investigation. This is also similar to the model of analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994:10) in which data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification.

5.6 Theory or method?

Fowler (1996:8) calls for a “comprehensive methodological guide” for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)¹³⁰ and others have echoed this arguing for stabilizing a method (Toolan, 1998). However, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999:16) disagree and argue:

We see CDA as both theory and method: as a method for analyzing social practices with particular regard to their discourse moments within the linking of theoretical and practical concerns and public spheres just alluded to, where the ways of analyzing ‘operationalize’ –make practical – theoretical constructions of discourse in (late modern) social life, and the analyses contribute to the development and elaboration of these theoretical constructions.

Thus the emphasis of these researchers is on the mutually informing development of theory and method. Additionally they argue “while such calls for stabilisation would have institutional and especially pedagogical advantages,¹³¹ it would compromise the developing capacity of CDA to shed light on the dialectic of the semiotic and social in a wide variety of social practices” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:17). In line with this thinking I have presented the main theoretical foundations of critical theory and CDA in my theoretical chapter (cf chapter 4). Here I elaborate on the specific CDA method and the framework that I utilize in my analysis of the LiEP and other relevant documents.

¹³⁰ See also 4.2.2 for a discussion of the theoretical foundations that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is based on.

¹³¹ Fowler’s (1996:8) criticism is based, in part, on such pedagogical arguments.

5.6.1 CDA and the language policy

According to Fairclough (1989:1) CDA is important in raising the “consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation”. An important aspect of this is an attempt to explain existing “conventions as the outcome of power relations and power struggle...[with a] particular emphasis upon ‘common-sense’ assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware” (Fairclough, 1989:2). These assumptions are referred to as *ideologies*. For van Dijk (1998) the notion of ideology is associated with concepts of power and dominance. As the ruling class controls the means of production and the (re)production of ideas they are then “able to make their ideologies more or less accepted by the ruled as undisputed knowledge of the ‘natural’ way things are” (van Dijk, 1998:2). Van Dijk (1998:3) argues that for Gramsci (cf Gramsci, 1980 where he more specifically develops this argument in part three) “these relations between ideology and society were conceptualized in terms of ‘hegemony’. Thus, instead of the imposition of dominant ideologies by a ruling class, hegemony more subtly works through the management of the mind of the citizen, for example by persuasively constructing a consensus about the social order”. Fairclough’s (1989:2) argument is similar in that “the exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through ideological workings of language” (cf Ngũgĩ, 1987). Thus it is important to discover how ideologies are produced and reproduced by dominant groups.

According to van Dijk (1996) and other researchers the crucial task of CDA is to account for the relationship between discourse and social power. In particular his focus is on how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by the text and the talk of dominant groups. This may be achieved by exploring *patterns of access* to discourse (van Dijk, 1996). In exploring this important dimension of discourse some important questions are asked: “*Who may speak or write to whom, about what, when and in what context, or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles*” (van Dijk, 1996:86)? More importantly for this research: *Whose opinions were able to influence public policy and who was involved in these policy decisions? What was included in the various documents leading up to the LiEP and what was excluded?*

According to van Dijk (1996:84-85) the assumptions of the framework are as follows:

1. Power is a property of relations between social groups, institutions or organizations. Hence, only *social power*, and not individual power, is considered.
2. Social power is defined in terms of the *control* exercised by one group or organization (or its members) over the *actions* and/or the *minds* of (the members of) another group, thus limiting the freedom of action of the others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies.
3. Power of a specific group or institution may be ‘distributed’, and may be restricted to a specific social *domain* or *scope*, such as that of politics, the media, law and order, education or corporate business, thus resulting in different ‘centres’ of power and elite groups that control such centers.
4. *Dominance* is here understood as a form of social power *abuse*, that is, as a legally or morally illegitimate exercise for control over others in one’s own interests, often resulting in social inequality.
5. Power is *based* on privileged access to valued social resources, such as wealth, jobs, status or indeed, a preferential access to public discourse and communication. [Also for this investigation preferential access to the English language may be added to this list].
6. Social power and dominance are often *organised* and *institutionalised*, so as to allow more effective control, and to enable routine forms of power reproduction.
7. Dominance is seldom absolute; it is often *gradual*, and may be met by more or less *resistance* or counter-power by dominated groups.

In commenting on these definitions of power and dominance van Dijk points to the relevance of the *cognitive* dimension of control. Thus “power abuse not only involves the abuse of force...more crucially [it] may affect the minds of people” (van Dijk, 1996:85). This may be seen, for example, in the colonization of the mind which occurs as a result of the domination of the colonizer’s language over the language of the colonized (Ngũgĩ, 1987). Furthermore, for van Dijk access to discourse and communicative events is viewed as an important element in the reproduction of power and dominance. In analyzing patterns of access, a number of dimensions are seen as important. I will briefly present these dimensions¹³² below (van Dijk, 1996:87-89 emphasis original).

1. **Planning** – Patterns of discourse access begin with taking the initiative, the preparation or the *planning* of a communicative event. For example, political party members may decide to meet to discuss policy options as individual parties or a collection of several political parties each with their own policy preferences, or a teacher may decide to hold an exam. Such plans usually imply decisions about the setting (time, place) and an ‘agenda’ for talk. A relevant aspect for this investigation to consider is also who decides the language of the exam or the language used for presenting and discussing policy options need to be taken into account.

¹³² The dimensions discussed here are based on van Dijk’s (1996:87-89) framework. In addition to summarizing van Dijk’s framework here I have also elaborated upon it by providing additions that are of relevance to this investigation.

2. **Setting** – Different participants may control many elements of the setting of communicative events. It is thus important, for this investigation in particular, to consider who is allowed or obliged to participate and in what role. This may also be decided by a chairperson or by other powerful participants who control the interaction. It is important to note that the actual proceedings of each political meeting is difficult to obtain, but that this investigation attempts to highlight who participated in certain decisions relating to the LiEP through document analysis and interviews with key people involved in language policy issues in South Africa.
3. **Controlling communicative events** – The crucial form of access consists of the power to control various dimensions of speech and talk itself: which mode of communication may/must be used (spoken, written), which language may/must be used by whom (dominant or standard language, a dialect, etc.), which genres of discourse are allowed, or who may begin or interrupt turns of talk or discursive sequences.
 - Participants may also have differential access (the power of the particular group may contribute to this as, for example, women vs. men, oppressor vs. oppressed or for historical reasons due to oppression as seen through apartheid, which oppressed and segregated different racial groups resulting in differential access to language) to topics, style or rhetoric. In addition, they may be required to speak or contribute in the standard language. Thus virtually all levels and dimensions of text and talk may have obligatory, optional or preferential access for different participants as a function of their social and institutional power. Such power may be enacted, confirmed and reproduced by such differential patterns of access to various forms of discourse in different social situations. Thus, having access to the speech act of a command presupposes as well as enacts and confirms the social power of the speaker.
4. **Scope and audience control** – For dialogues such as formal meetings, sessions or debates, initiators or participants may allow or require specific participants to be present (or absent), or allow or require these others to listen and/or to speak. In addition, speakers may also control audiences. The scope of access, in terms of size of the audience of one's discourse, is an important criterion of power; control is much more effective if the minds of the audience can also be successfully 'accessed'. When speakers are able to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes, and eventually even the ideologies of recipients, they may indirectly control their future actions. Mentally mediated control of the actions of others is the ultimate form of power, particularly when the audience is hardly aware of such control.

Finally, van Dijk (1996:91-92) argues that the power held by the power elites "implies preferential access to the means of mass communication, political decision-making discourse, the discourses of bureaucracy, and the legal system...The opposite is true for ethnic minority groups, whose subordination is further exacerbated by their (generally) lower class position. That is, their lack of access is not merely defined in terms of racial or ethnic exclusion, but also by their class-dependent lack of access to good education, status, employment or capital". As such minority or oppressed groups in general have less or no access to the following crucial communicative contexts:

- Government and legislative discourses of decision-making, information, persuasion and legitimation, especially at the national/state levels
- Bureaucratic discourses of higher level policy-making and policy implementation
- Mass media discourse of major news media
- Scholarly or scientific discourse
- Corporate discourse

In addition to this framework presented by van Dijk (1996) I also include a brief analysis of how social actors are represented in the text (the LiEP and other policy texts and documents) and focus then on what is excluded and what is included (van Leeuwen, 1996). In CDA exclusions have been viewed as an important aspect.

Representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers from whom they are intended. Some of the exclusions may be ‘innocent’, details which readers are assumed to know already, or which are deemed irrelevant to them, others tie in close to the propaganda strategy of creating fear, and of setting up immigrants as enemies of ‘our’ interests (van Leeuwen, 1996:38).

In the case of this investigation then the propaganda being created deals directly with the issue of language and, more specifically, with issues relating to equity and multilingualism. This is viewed as important given that both equity and multilingualism were put forth as major objectives of the new ANC-led government. Kress (1996) comments on the issue of equity, which is notably connected to this investigation. In Kress’ (1996:18) view equity has usually been viewed as “a matter of making concessions to marginal groups, allowing them access to goods which dominant mainstream group(s) enjoy, of being ‘nice’ to those less fortunate than oneself”. However, he argues that equity should be treated as something which works reciprocally, in *all* directions.

[Thus], a truly equitable society is one in which the mainstream groups see it as essential to have access to the linguistic and cultural resources of minority groups and demand such access as a matter of equity. Equity cannot be left as a matter of making concessions; it has to be seen as a matter of equality of cultural trade, where each social group is seen as having contributions of equal value to make to all other social groups in the larger social unit (Kress, 1996:18).

Therefore, it may be argued that not only must powerful discourses be accessible to less powerful groups, but also “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980:82) should be made available and given authority so that they too can become accessible to dominant mainstream groups as well.

5.7 Validity and reliability

Although treated differently the questions of reliability and validity are equally important in quantitative and qualitative research (Brock-Utne, 1996). According to Kvale (1996) validity refers to issues of truth and knowledge. Thus validity can be defined as the ability of the researcher to produce true knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. In data collection validity means that an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe.

Kleven (1995:25) discusses the issue of reliability in qualitative research stating that it only has relevance because it is a necessary precondition for attaining validity. Kleven poses the question of whether or not there is the need for reliability as an independent concept. Kvale (1996) argues that reliability pertains to the consistency of research finding. He also suggests that researchers may specifically use leading questions in order to check the reliability of the interviewees' answers.

In quantitative investigations reliability and validity are important criteria in establishing and assessing the quality of the research. Among qualitative researchers there has been some discussion, however, concerning their relevance for qualitative studies. Some researchers have sought to apply the concepts of reliability and validity to the practice of qualitative research, particularly in case studies (Yin, 1994: 33) suggesting the following:

- *Construct validity*- establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied.
- *Internal validity*- establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships.
- *External validity*- establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized.
- *Reliability*- demonstrating that the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures can be repeated, with the same results.

Other researchers argue that the grounding of these ideas in quantitative research, as the criteria presented by Yin, makes them inappropriate for qualitative research. Others propose alternative terms and ways of assessing qualitative research. For example Lincoln and Guba (1985 cf 289-331) propose *trustworthiness* as a criterion of how good a qualitative study is. Each aspect of trustworthiness has a parallel with quantitative research criteria.

- *Credibility*: parallels internal validity – i.e. how believable are the findings?
- *Transferability*: parallels external validity – i.e. do the findings apply to other contexts?
- *Dependability*: parallels reliability – i.e. are the findings likely to apply at other times?
- *Confirmability*: parallels objectivity [or biasedness] – i.e. has the researcher allowed his/her values to intrude to a high degree?

Furthermore, it has been noted that in qualitative investigation *the researcher is the instrument* (Patton, 1990). Thus the validity of the research depends to some extent on the skill, competence and rigor of the fieldworker. In this case Patton suggests that the research report (or dissertation in this case) include information about the researcher (for example, experience, training, and perspectives the researcher brings to the field). This dissertation has already provided this information by discussing how I became interested in the topic of study (some of my perceptions on the issue) and the connections to previous work (cf 1.1), which serves to highlight the previous experience and training received while working on my Master thesis. Additional perspectives that have been brought to the field have been discussed by highlighting the limitations of my own background and by suggesting a critical approach, which strives to be self-reflective and considers the social importance of my actions as a researcher (cf 4.2.1). Thus as Patton (1990:472 emphasis original) claims:

There can be no definitive list of questions that must be addressed to establish investigator credibility. *The principle is to report any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation – either negatively or positively – in the minds of users of the findings.*

This dissertation strives to serve both the results of the research and to establish my credibility as a researcher in the minds of those who will make use of the findings presented here.

Ultimately, this research made use of a combination of research orientation criteria in order to support the validity and reliability of the findings.

5.7.1 Internal validity/credibility

Internal validity or credibility refers to the correctness of the research in portraying the phenomenon being studied (Brock-Utne, 1996) or in the words of Lincoln and Guba (1985) are the findings believable. Patton (1990) suggests that by using the voices of those being studied we may increase face validity and credibility. This is achieved by joining the

researcher's perspective to those who will ultimately use the information (the participants of the study) and by assessing how the people in the analysis react to the accuracy and fairness of the data analysis (Patton, 1990). Here I periodically presented reports and papers to those involved in the research (teachers, principals, language policy experts and others) to receive their reaction to what was being described. The point being that I was attempting to see the extent that participants in the investigation were able to relate the description and analysis found in these reports and papers, which according to Patton (1990:469) was "a test of face validity" that helped to increase credibility of the research. As such not only the voices of the informants in the form of excerpts from interviews consisting of direct quotations have been used, but also included are the voices of participants in the research analysis.

By applying internal validity or credibility to this study, I attempted to describe and explain the phenomenon under investigation. In the study the phenomenon was the implementation of the language policy. Also by conducting fieldwork I was able to get the view of those directly responsible for the implementation of the policy at the grassroots level. By using the voices, as described above, of the teachers, students, principals, and others involved in the implementation of the policy the credibility of the study was increased.

5.7.2 External validity/transferability

External validity or transferability refers to what extent the findings may be generalized¹³³ to other populations or do they apply to other contexts. Brock-Utne (1996:617) suggests the concept of ecological validity that "concerns the extent to which behavior observed in one context can be generalized to another". However, Patton (1990) suggests that instead of attempting to generalize findings qualitative research should aim at extrapolation. Thus the researcher may speculate on the applicability of the findings to similar, yet not identical, situations. Such evaluations may be particularly useful when they are targeted to the stakeholders' concerns about the present and future. Furthermore, Patton (1990: 490) argues:

Evaluation findings are most useful with regard to the particular setting from which those findings emerged, and the interpretation of findings is particular to those people who need and expect to use the information that has been generated by evaluation

¹³³ In chapter 8 I also deal with the issue of generalizability.

research. This perspective makes it clear that the purpose of evaluation research is to provide information that is useful and informs action.

This study did not consider the issue of generalization of the actual findings. Rather it attempted to provide information on the obstacles faced by the different schools in implementation of the language policy. As a result the aims were to persuade as opposed to convince, argue rather than demonstrate, strive to be credible and not certain, and aspire to be accepted as opposed to compelling (Patton, 1990). Here the evaluation data is placed in context and persuasion is related to action because it focuses on a particular audience and assembles information that is of concern to that particular audience.

In addition, Brock-Utne (1996:618) maintains that in an effort to maintain high ecological validity in educational research “it is necessary that as many characteristics as possible about the school [or schools] in question are given”. However, she also warns that in doing so it becomes easier to identify the particular schools, which in turn reduces the anonymity of the schools. Such a problem was encountered by Brock-Utne (1981) where she was involved in a project researching three different secondary schools in Norway. Brock-Utne (1981, 1996) describes how one headmaster was so threatened by the description of his school that he wanted her to drop the school from the investigation or alternatively write in such a way that no one, not even those working at the school, would be able to recognize it. However, as Brock-Utne (1996) argues, in that case ecological validity would have been so low that it might have been assumed that she was writing fiction.

In my own description of the schools in this investigation (cf 5.3.3) it may also be easy to identify which schools I am describing especially for people knowing the area well and thus anonymity may be difficult to uphold. Yet, Brock-Utne (1996) argues that in African educational research today perhaps these approaches are necessary and if we find that “the description of the problems they encounter rather similar, we may say that the research method used high reliability as well as validity” (Brock-Utne, 1996:619). Finally, I have discussed the description of the schools given (again see 5.3.3) with the principals of each school and in each case approval for the information has been given and thus I have not encountered the problems described by Brock-Utne (1981) where a headmaster would ask me to write fiction.

5.7.3 Construct validity

Yin (1994) maintains that this area can be very problematic in that researchers fail to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures. He suggests three tactics that the researcher may use in order to increase construct validity: (1) use multiple sources of evidence, (2) establish a chain of evidence, and (3) have key informants review a draft case study report.

The first step refers to the use of triangulation, which helps to eliminate biases which could occur if one relied exclusively on one data collection method, source, analyst, or theory (Gall et al., 1996). As previously mentioned (cf 5.2) this study utilized triangulation in order to validate the data and to produce converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 1994).

By establishing a chain of evidence Gall et al. (1996) suggest that the researcher should provide an audit trail, which is a documentation of the research process. The dissertation could then serve this function in that it documents the research process, which includes the fieldwork, the theoretical background as well as data collection and subsequent analysis in combination with the presentation of the research results.

Finally, the issue of key informants reviewing the draft case study reports is equivalent to what Gall et al. (1996) label as member checking. This requires that the individuals review their statements in order to check the accuracy and correctness as reported by the researcher. In order to assure the accuracy of the findings in this study each informant was sent a copy of his or her transcribed interview for approval. This was, however, not possible with the students as the transcribed interviews were in English and their ability to read English even one year later was still too low. These were the only interviews that were not reviewed by the respondents. I personally delivered the transcribed interviews to the teachers and school principals, while other interviews were sent via e-mail or by surface mail. Thus the interviewees were able to check for any errors in reporting on my part and make any changes or additions they felt were necessary. The transcribed interviews from the language policy experts were corrected, for the most part, confirmed although small typographical corrections were made. However, one of the policy informants asked that I delete a section where the information included reflected personal beliefs about a ministry official, which he did not want publicized. Naturally I accepted this request and deleted the information from the interview, as the information was not really relevant to the study and I felt that the reason for

member checking was not only to confirm the information, but moreover to allow for changes if there was disagreement. As for the teachers and principals they confirmed the information presented in the interviews, as did the ministry officials and others. Furthermore, the principals reviewed the descriptions of the schools and reports/papers on the project were continually sent to the schools for comment in an attempt to increase the construct validity and credibility of this investigation.

5.7.4 Reliability

Yin (1994) suggests that in order to increase reliability the researcher should develop a case study database. The database should be comprised of four components: notes, documents, materials and narratives. In this study notes are comprised of fieldnotes taken concerning general observations while in the field as well as those taken in the classrooms and during interviews. The database also includes relevant documents such as the language policy itself, copies of the Constitution of South Africa, Commission reports, draft documents, etc. Finally, narratives refer to the transcribed interviews done with key informants. Thus with the help of a database as described above the reliability of the study has been increased.

5.8 Summary

In this chapter I have argued for a qualitative research design as one of the main emphases in this study is to see through the eyes of the research participants and to report an emic perspective of those most directly involved. This approach expresses concern for what is actually taking place at the classroom level (the micro) in relation to the implementation of the LiEP. In achieving this objective an ethnographic strategy has been chosen allowing me to immerse myself in the lives of the classrooms participants to achieve a deep understanding of their efforts to implement and manage the LiEP, in an effort to produce a contextualized reproduction and interpretation of the stories told by the participants (Denzin, 1989b). The final interpretive tale from the field, which “may assume several forms: confessional, realist, impressionistic, critical, formal, literary, analytic, grounded theory, and so on” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:23) “is multivoiced and dialogical. It builds on native interpretations and in fact simply articulates what is implicit in those interpretations” (Denzin, 1989b:120).

In looking at the macro level this investigation not only focuses on the implementation, but also the LiEP and how it developed, as opposed to taking the policy as a point of departure. In this chapter the critical discourse analysis framework used in analyzing the LiEP has been addressed. The focus of the framework is to understand how ideologies are produced and reproduced by dominant groups and as a result what is excluded and what is included in the final LiEP, and the patterns of access to the discourse surrounding the LiEP and its development.

I now turn my attention to the analysis of the empirical material taking into consideration the information presented in the previous chapters. In chapter 6 I begin with the analysis of the Language-in-Education Policy supported by the critical discourse analysis framework discussed in this chapter. First, a discussion of the history of language policy in South Africa is introduced, followed by an analysis of how the Language-in-Education Policy developed and concluding with an analysis of the actual LiEP. In chapter 7 the ethnographic classroom data will be presented and discussed.

Chapter 6. The Language-in-Education Policy (LIEP): analysis and discussion

6.1 Introduction

Language policies for education are highly charged political issues seldom, if ever, decided on educational grounds alone. When they are made, they are almost invariably subject to mistrust and misunderstanding by some sections of the community. It is virtually impossible to please everyone. This is particularly true of the experience of bilingual and multilingual countries such as Canada, Belgium and most countries in Africa, but it has also been true in Great Britain and the USA where issues of class and the demands of minorities have destroyed earlier complacency about the unproblematic nature of language decisions in education. In South Africa these decisions have had to do with issues of political dominance, the protection of power structures, the preservation of privilege and the distribution of economic resources. As with schooling it has been an instrument of social and political control (Hartshorne, 1992:186-87).

For nearly fifty years the majority of South Africans suffered from language policies aimed at social and political control under apartheid. As a result schools were used as a mechanism to restrict speakers of African languages from access to power with language policies in education as a major component in the apartheid plan (under British rule the policies served a similar purpose although not necessarily following the same ideology; cf 2.1.1 & 2.1.2). The ultimate goal of these policies was separate and unequal development. The result was social and economic development of the dominant minority alongside the social and economic underdevelopment of the oppressed majority. Great socio-economic divisions between different racial groups characterized the society inherited by the new government. If the ANC's vision of non-racialism, development, and equity was to be realized upon its rise to power, in 1994, both the society and economy required transformation.

Apartheid South Africa represented an entirely autonomous and indeed renegade policy regime that combined Western economic modernization goals with racist categories and allocative procedures. In 1994, when racism was overturned as a state policy, there was intense pressure to redress the imbalances as quickly as possible. The legitimacy of the new government was bound up in delivery of 'development' in the form of basic infrastructure provisioning of transport, improved housing, water and electricity supplies for the black population on a massive scale (Bryceson & Bank, 2001: 8).

Moreover, improved educational opportunities for the black population need to be added to the list above. In an attempt to redress the imbalances of the past, the interim 1993 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the subsequent 1996 Constitution, in Section 6(1), recognized eleven languages to be official languages. As a result of this new law nine indigenous African languages were included with the former two official languages, English and Afrikaans. Furthermore, Section 29(2) states the right of citizens “to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable”.

Following this, educational legislation has been passed to implement a new school system, with “the matter of curriculum and language policy...[being viewed] as two separate areas requiring parallel and separate discussion” (Heugh, 2002:173). The new LiEP introduced the eleven official languages (amongst those nine African languages [Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga], a European [English] and a European-based [Afrikaans] language) and a new policy for schools on medium of instruction. The main policy objectives of the LiEP are to promote additive and functional multilingualism, and sociolinguistic and cultural integration (DoE, 1997a).

In this chapter I present my analysis of this new LiEP and discuss them in a critical perspective. I focus my analysis on “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 2001:300). In particular I focus on the discourse in the LiEP in an attempt to highlight the power relations at work. In analyzing the LiEP I will also draw on other texts (on the issue of intertextuality cf Fairclough, 1995) which may have influenced the LiEP. Consequently, I will make an attempt not only to focus on the production of the various structures of text and talk, but also attempt to ascertain the consequences of these structures for the recipients. Before proceeding, let me begin by presenting a brief historical discussion of the language issue in South Africa. This is followed by an examination of the negotiations and developments leading up to the LiEP document. Subsequently, my own analysis of the LiEP will follow combined with a discussion of the current literature on the LiEP and language issues in general.

6.2 The history of language policy

In South Africa, the history of the use of language in African [black] schooling has revolved around the relative positions and status of English, Afrikaans and the African languages, and been determined by the political and economic power of those using the various languages. The decisions have never been taken by those who use African languages in their everyday life, and ironically, when decisions were taken in favour of those languages they were taken without reference to their users, and for purposes far removed from any that had broad community support. The decisions were taken ‘for’ and not ‘by’ those most closely involved...(Hartshorne, 1992:187-88).¹³⁴

As I will highlight in this chapter the language issue in South African education has mainly centered on the position of English and Afrikaans and when the African languages were considered it was not for reasons that benefited the majority black population, but rather for reasons designed to serve the needs of the whites. Also this brief historical account will show how decisions concerning language in education have been taken *for* the African language speakers and not *by* them.

The first school for black people in South Africa was founded in the Cape in 1658 and was originally intended for the instruction of the black population only, both those that had come from West Africa and the black South Africans (Malherbe, 1925). According to Malherbe, instruction was to be given in the Dutch language with the focus on Christian Religion. This school was eventually closed as the blacks (many of them slaves) interestingly enough “had the reprehensible habit of running away” (Malherbe, 1925:28fn). The first school for white children was subsequently opened in 1663 with a total of 17 children: “12 white, one hottentot¹³⁵ and 4 slaves”.

¹³⁴ I would like to note here that I make considerable use of Hartshorne, particularly in this chapter, as he is seen as one of the leading writers concerning the history of black education in South Africa. For more than fifty years he has been involved in education in South Africa and has participated in numerous committees dealing with the education of black people in the country. To have overlooked his important insights would have been to disregard a significant contribution to the understanding of educational policy and practice in South Africa. Obtaining his views through other means such as interviews was not possible in this investigation and thus his writings serve as an important source of information. Furthermore, as noted in my methodology chapter I analyze various documents in this study and the work of Hartshorne is seen as a vital contribution to the historical analysis. Certainly it can be argued that Hartshorne (and other historical sources) may be described as normative while others are descriptive. However, given that I subscribe to a critical theoretical approach founded on a humanistic interpretation of Marx where the relationship between facts and values is questioned, using such normative texts may be necessary in pointing out what is right and wrong, desirable or undesirable, just or unjust in South African society, particularly from a historical perspective. For Marx the argument was that philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it (cf Habermas, 1974, 1987).

¹³⁵ The term ‘hottentot’ was generally used to describe the linguistic group known as the Khoekhoe. I am also aware of the negative connotations the term carries and only use it as it is referred to in the literature (cf chapter 2 for this discussion). Currently the term Khoe or Khoekhoe is preferred. However, it is important to recognize

When the English took over the colony in the early 19th century the estimated white population was 25,000 (Malherbe, 1925) and although only about 50% of the whites were Dutch most of the whites spoke Dutch (or Cape Dutch as it was known). Despite the English taking control of the colony in 1806, the influence of the Dutch language continued. It was decreed by the first Commissioner General, J. A. de Mist, that “no person born in the Colony after January 1st, 1800, could hold a Government post...unless he had received his elementary education” (Malherbe, 1925:51) and that no person was allowed to hold office that could not speak, read, and write the Dutch language. It was not until 1814 that Holland finally surrendered the colony to Britain. At this point the Anglicization of all institutions began, with education seen as one of the most effective means of implementing this process. The English disapproved of Dutch as a language medium and efforts were made to import English and Scottish ministers and schoolmasters, which was aimed not only at teaching the Afrikaners English, but also to transform them into Englishmen (Kotzé, 1981). In March 1853 a Constitution was ratified, which proclaimed English as the sole medium to be used in Parliament (Scholtz, 1981).

The medium question was to become a vital point in the control of education in South Africa. In 1874 the Transvaal law gave parents the option of choosing between English or Dutch as the medium of instruction for their children (Malherbe, 1925). However, in his writings Malherbe makes no reference to the education of the Africans as this choice appears to be only offered to whites. In fact Hartshorne (1992:188) contends that until 1910 “little interest was shown in the education of African children” and in 1908 the Dutch mission station school opened with the medium of instruction being English. Moreover, the lack of literature regarding the education of the blacks in this early period certainly suggests that there was very little concern in education for the indigenous population. The language struggle and in particular the language-in-education situation can best be described as an ongoing rivalry and competition between the two white, originally European, population groups, which reflects a pendulum swinging between Afrikaans and English as official languages and as media of instruction, with little or no regard for the African languages.

that Malherbe was writing his first volume in the early 1920s when the term was still in use. However, in his second volume written in the 1970s he changed much of his language concerning the various racial groups.

English-speaking settlers, like their Dutch counterparts...were not sympathetic to the idea of black schooling, believing that 'it spoilt the Natives', gave them ideas above 'their station' in life, and was too 'academic' in its nature. Part of this latter criticism had to do with the teaching of English to black pupils and the development of what was called a 'clerk mentality'. 'What was needed was a training in agriculture and the more menial vocational subjects...[However] economic forces were [also] beginning to play their part, and the economic value of a knowledge of English came to be appreciated by both the black employee [in the mining industry] and those that employed him. [Nonetheless] there was no question of black schooling in general being allowed to equip blacks to challenge the domination of whites in the area of economic power and privilege (Hartshorne, 1992:188-89).

Additionally, missionary attitudes to the use of English in African schooling were not homogenous as the German and Swiss missionaries were strong advocates of the use of the vernacular and were less committed to the use of English than were British missionaries (Thompson, 1990; Hartshorne, 1992). Despite the missionary influence at the time of the Union of South Africa¹³⁶ in 1910, English was well-established as the dominant language in the education of Africans, while in the Transvaal and Natal regions greater use of the vernaculars was favored.

At the time of the Union the language concerns of the majority of the people were not taken into consideration and decisions were taken by whites for whites and consideration was given only to English and Afrikaans. Thus in Article 137 of the 1910 Union Constitution: "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" (cited in Malherbe, 1925:414fn). Thus with this the first official bilingual language policy in education was passed. "The role of the two official languages in the schools has [*sic*] become [and would remain for sometime] one of the most important national issues in South Africa, politically as well as educationally" (Malherbe, 1977:3). It is important to mention here that Afrikaans replaced Dutch officially in 1925. This transformation began as early as 1914 due to the influence of C. J. Langenhoven, a well-known Afrikaans writer. The substitution of Dutch with the vernacular Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools also contributed to the development of the Afrikaner's political consciousness (Malherbe, 1977). The elevation of Afrikaans from a vernacular to a language of culture involved considerably more than using it as a written language (cf chapter 2). Enormous social energy was involved through ethnic mobilization. The use of Afrikaans became an ideological tool in mobilizing a powerful

¹³⁶ From this point the Union will be used to denote the founding of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

ethnic movement in the first decade of the twentieth century. In attempting to accommodate both white groups, legislation was passed as early as 1907 and 1908 that specifically made use of both languages as media of instruction which led to dual-medium and bilingual schools for white pupils (Malherbe, 1977) while the language-in-education circumstances for the majority of the population were not given any special consideration. Between 1910 and 1948 the role of these two official languages would come to dominate educational discourse. During this time there were also two essentially distinct positions in relation to language-in-education.

On the one hand there was the Hertzog-Smuts tradition of co-operation, bilingualism and a common 'South Africanism' for the white groups, culminating in the years after the Second World War in the attempt to introduce dual medium instruction in the schools as official policy. On the other, what was to prove the stronger stream of thought, culminating in the National Party victory at the polls in 1948, was the strong emphasis on exclusive Afrikaans mother-tongue instruction in separate schools, where the concern was for the creation of a powerful Afrikaner identity which would provide the emotional drive for the acquisitions of political and economic power (Hartshorne, 1992:191).

Concerning schooling for Africans, the major concern was with the status of English and the vernacular languages, and it was not until the 1930s that the status of Afrikaans would be considered in black education (Hartshorne, 1992). In 1935 the government set up an investigation into Native Education known as the Welsh Committee. When it began its investigation the language situation in black schools was as follows:

As far as the medium of instruction was concerned the position that the pupil's mother tongue was to be used for the first six years...in Natal, for the first four years...in the Cape and Free State, and for the first two years...in the Transvaal. Thereafter an official language – in practice almost always English – was to be used as a medium (Hartshorne, 1992:193).

This was to remain the policy until 1955 with the exception of the Transvaal, which extended the use of the mother tongue up to and including Grade 4. Thus for the most part a transitional approach to bilingual education has generally been the only option available for Africans, with Natal opting for late transition while an early transitional program was in effect in the other provinces (cf 4.5.1 for a description of these programs).

Following the work of the Welsh Committee, a new curriculum issued in 1938 in the Transvaal made both English and Afrikaans compulsory subjects. According to Hartshorne (1992:195) “the strongest pressure for the proper recognition of Afrikaans in education, including African schooling...had political origins”. In the 1950s language planning in education was organized centrally and stood directly under government control. Language planning was top-down and differentiation between the various racial groups was introduced to enhance their separate development while simultaneously securing the hegemony of the whites. The arrogance of the whites in controlling the lives of blacks and their children is clearly stated in the Eiselen Report as much of the evidence given by blacks collected by the Commission was disregarded (cf 2.2.1).

We realize that in this connection we will have to face great difficulties and that public opinion, especially among the Bantu, is to a large extent still unenlightened, and that it would consequently possibly be hostile to any drastic change in the use of the medium of instruction (Eiselen Report, 1951 cited in Hartshorne, 1992:196).

Hartshorne (1992:196) comments on this quote stating:

What is appalling about...this statement...is the unquestioning assumption of white superiority in all matters – that even on issues touching the everyday lives of blacks and their children, whites would presume ‘to know better’, to know ‘what was good for’ others, when in fact they were vastly ignorant of the needs and aspirations of those for whom they were prescribing.

Thus it may be argued that the discourse presented in the Eiselen Report was important as it both created and expressed the underlying apartheid ideology – the unquestioning hegemony of the whites over the lives of the blacks, and how at the time the only view that mattered was that of the whites.

The Bantu Education Act in 1953 brought all schools for the black population under the control of the Department of Native Affairs and as a result phased out the independent missionary schools that had existed. Furthermore, Bantu Education imposed a uniform curriculum that stressed a separate “Bantu culture” with the intent to prepare students for little more than manual labor. This ideology was very clear in the words of Dr. Verwoerd in his speech pertaining to the Bantu Education Act delivered to Parliament in 1953:

The curriculum, therefore, envisages a system of education which, starting with the circumstances of the community, aims at meeting the requirements of the community and which will be given in the mother tongue of the pupils...

The economic structure of our country, of course, results in the Natives in large numbers having to earn their living in the service of Europeans. For that reason it is essential that Bantu students should receive instruction in both official languages...(Verwoerd, 1954:77).¹³⁷

Furthermore, in his speech Dr. Verwoerd mentions specific curriculum requirements that included more specifically religious instruction and handicraft. Hence, under the Bantu Education Act the foundations were laid for the development of the mother tongue in addition to an increased emphasis on Afrikaans as students were required to receive instruction in both official languages. Thus in reaction to the hegemony of English both English and Afrikaans were made compulsory “because of a fear that if only one were to be chosen, it would be English. Finally, both English and Afrikaans were to be used as mediums [*sic*] of instruction in the secondary school, because it was realized that if a choice of one were allowed, English would never be displaced” (Hartshorne, 1995:310). Although, the Eiselen Report made strong recommendations for the use of the mother tongue, they were not adopted in full until 1956, starting with Grade 5 and ending with the Grade 8 level being implemented in 1959. What had previously been a flexible policy was now a rigid plan to be implemented without exception. The Bantu Education policy reinforced the use of the mother tongue in the junior primary school in addition to enforcing the teaching of both English and Afrikaans (the two official languages at the time) as subjects in the first year of schooling. Under this policy, then, mother tongue education was compulsory for African language speakers in the early grades with a sudden transition in later grades to English and/or Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. The reality was then, for the majority African language speakers, that three languages were required to cope with the demands of the curriculum. Additionally, Bantu Education with an emphasis on mother tongue instruction was coupled with an impoverished curriculum, which remained in effect even after the Bantu Education Department was renamed in 1977 to the Department of Education and Training (DET) (Heugh, 1995a).

¹³⁷ The source of this information, as previously mentioned, is taken from a collection of speeches by Dr. Verwoerd from 1948-1966 compiled in an edited book by Prof. Pelzer from the University of Pretoria and published in 1966. Although the speech was made by Dr. Verwoerd in 1953 the speech was not made public until June 7, 1954.

Whereas Afrikaans- and English-speaking pupils received their education through the medium of the mother tongue while they acquired the other official language as a second language either by studying it as a compulsory subject or through a dual-medium¹³⁸ program (also commonly referred to as a 50-50 policy) the 50-50 policy required the speakers of African languages to receive instruction in two languages, neither of which was the students' home language. For African language speakers half of the subjects were to be taught through the medium of Afrikaans and the other half through the medium of English. Hartshorne (1995:311) argues then "for the next twenty years the medium issue was at the center of the opposition to the system of Bantu education [and that] African opinion never became reconciled to the extension of mother-tongue medium beyond Standard 2,¹³⁹ nor to the dual-medium policy in the secondary school". For the speakers of African languages the dual-medium policy had considerable implications as it required them to learn *in* two foreign languages while for the Afrikaans- and English-speaking pupils they were required only to learn one additional language and often that language was learned as a subject and not used as a medium of instruction, except for those students who chose dual-medium programs. For the speakers of African languages this choice was not an option. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s those organizations close to the Department of Bantu Education – the Advisory Board for Bantu Education, the school boards, and the African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA) – attempted to get the Department to reconsider its language medium policy (Hartshorne, 1992; 1995). Ultimately, the Department was only able to authorize exemptions from the application of the dual medium in secondary schools as the government took an inflexible standpoint concerning its policy in primary schools.

Hartshorne (1995:311) claims that it was ironic that the "first major blow to state policy was to come from 'within the system', from one of the homelands created under the ideology of apartheid. One of the first legislative acts of the new Transkei Assembly in 1963 was to determine that Xhosa should be used as medium for the first four years only in the primary school, and thereafter English was to be used exclusively". The resentment of Bantu

¹³⁸ Hartshorne (1995) notes that for the most part the dual-medium education model for white schools was rejected in 1945. Conversely, Malherbe (1977:93-100) describes the dual-medium project for English- and Afrikaans-speaking students in the mid 1940s. He cites that in the Cape Province in 1943 there were 187 secondary and high schools that were dual-medium. Despite some initial positive outcomes of the experimental program Malherbe (1977) contends that the program was ultimately discontinued in 1950 mainly due to lack of bilingual teachers, but also due to political reasons.

¹³⁹ In the old educational system Standard 2 was equal to Grade 4. Thus the Standard grade plus 2 equals the grade in the new system.

education and anger over the language issue, in particular, is reflected in the words of one of the Xhosa chiefs, Matanzima, from the Transkei who argued the following point:

The Department of Education in the Transkei should be solely responsible for the nature and standard of education to be given to the Bantu child. The Republican Government should stop interference. The People of the Transkei should decide on the medium of instruction and syllabi (cited in Hill, 1964:70).

Consequently from 1967 each of the homelands followed the Transkei pattern and by 1974 all but two homelands (QwaQwa and Venda) had adopted the use of English as medium from grade 5 (Hartshorne, 1995). As a result these homelands adopted a transitional bilingual education approach with an abrupt transition to English in Grade 5.

The Bantu Education Advisory Board presented a report to the Department of Bantu Education in 1972 recommending mother tongue medium for the first six years of primary school. Despite the attempts made by the Department, the government was insistent on maintaining the dual-medium approach. Thus initially the 50-50 policy was not enforced and as a result English was the de facto medium after Grade 8. In fact by 1968 only 26% of the schools had implemented this language policy (NEPI, 1992:28). However, the government was taking steps to enforce this policy and the practical implications were such that public examinations at the end of Grade 7, which had been kept in the primary school as a bridge to the secondary school, now had to be written in both English and Afrikaans, instead of in the mother tongue (Hartshorne, 1992, 1995). Increasingly the number of schools, teachers, and pupils affected by the hard-line dual-medium policy was increasing. In 1975, “the first year in which the new examination was taken, it was found that the Department was not prepared to make any exceptions and the new policy was rigorously pursued” (Hartshorne, 1995:312). Hartshorne (1992:203) describes the events vividly:

Throughout 1975 and the early part of 1976, teacher groups, principals, school boards and the Soweto Urban Bantu Council, for example, urged the Department to take a more relaxed, flexible approach to the medium question, but to no avail. At the beginning of 1976, the Meadowlands Tswana School Board took unilateral action and instructed their schools to use English only from Std 3 [Grade 5]. This resulted in the department dismissing two of the members of the Board, whereupon the entire board resigned in protest. From the beginning of 1976, too, clear expressions of dissatisfaction began to come from the pupils of many higher primary and junior secondary schools in Soweto. They were feeling the weight of the dual medium policy much more heavily than pupils in Std. 9-10 [Grade 11-12] who, for the most part, were

still using only English. Major strike action started on 17 May, when the pupils of Orlando West Junior Secondary School stayed away from class when the local circuit inspector refused to meet a committee they had elected to put forward their grievances. In the same week the stayaway was joined by pupils from three higher primary schools, and from this point on the strike spread rapidly and violence began to take place. By June 14, Leonard Mosala, a member of the Urban Bantu Council, was saying that 'we (the parents) have failed to help them in their struggle for change in schools. They are now angry and prepared to fight and we are afraid that the situation may become chaotic at any time'. He also warned that enforcing Afrikaans could result in another Sharpeville. Two days later the first major confrontation with police took place, and within a week at least 176 lives were lost.

Deegan (2001:46) describes that what had begun as a march through Soweto by 15,000 students who were protesting against the compulsory use of "Afrikaans language in schools ended in 'brutal suppression' when the police opened fire, killing several students, including a 13-year-old, Hector Peterson". A journalist from Soweto, Nomavenda Mathiane, witnessed and recorded the events of June 1976 as follows:

Soweto was engulfed in pain, blood and smoke. Children saw other children die. They saw their parents shot. On June 17, I watched as bodies were dragged out of what had been a shopping center on the Old Portch Road. I saw figures running out of the shops, some carrying goods. They ran across the road like wild animals, dropping like bags as bullets hit them. I saw billows of smoke shoot up as white-owned vehicles burned. I thought the world had come to an end. I heard leaders inside and outside Soweto plead for reason and I saw people detained and killed (Mathiane, 1989 cited in Deegan 2001:46).

Thus what began on June 16, 1976 as a student protest in reaction to the government's attempt to firmly enforce the 50-50 policy contributed to a day that shook South Africa, which would continue to haunt many South Africans for years to come. Theoretically speaking the speakers of African languages were to be taught through the medium of the mother tongue with a sudden transition to both English and Afrikaans as medium of instruction (half the subjects taught in English and the other half in Afrikaans) to take place after Grade 8.

Heugh (1999, 2002) argues that despite the emphasis placed on the role of the mother tongue in Bantu Education and the impoverished curriculum the matriculation pass rate for African language speaking students increased dramatically from 43.5% in 1955 and reaching their zenith of 83.4% in 1976. Thus she maintains that the increase in the pass rate may, in part, be attributed to the emphasis placed on the maintenance and development of the mother tongue during these years. It may be argued then that in the years of Bantu education, South Africa

(1953-1976) actually had a better language in education policy for the majority population, but for the wrong reasons. However, in her doctoral thesis Heugh (2003) has re-examined her original (1999) article, which suggests that Bantu Education had an impoverished curriculum and through her analysis she has found that the original literature she relied on may have been flawed. Her reassessment is based on the work by Babazile Mahlalela-Thusi (cf Mahlalela & Heugh, 2002; Mahlalela-Thusi & Heugh, 2002) who has analyzed school textbooks used during Bantu Education and found no evidence to support the impoverished curriculum claims. Yet, Heugh (2003) contends that the intent of the apartheid regime is not in dispute and I argue that certainly the ideology behind it had a certain amount of effect in its own right.

One of the teachers I interviewed in the schools who had experienced Bantu Education felt that having Xhosa as the medium of instruction was useful. During an interview with Avela, she stated that “we were taught that way [through the medium of Xhosa]. I never had real difficulty in high school...but when we had to switch from English to Afrikaans that was difficult” (interview: 26/11/01). For Avela the use of the mother tongue was seen as helpful, but it was the insistence on the 50-50 policy that was problematic. During the time that the mother tongue was phased in and maintained for 8 years as the primary language of learning, the matriculation results¹⁴⁰ of black students steadily improved. However, these results need to be looked at in relation to the total number of African language speaking students in the system, which increased substantially between 1955 and 1994. During Bantu Education there were only a small percentage of learners that made it to the matriculation level, and later there was mass education. Thus language may only be one of the contributing factors in the results discussed by Heugh (1999, 2002). It was an inflexible implementation of Afrikaans as a medium for 50% of the subjects in secondary school in 1975 that led to the student uprising in Soweto the following year. In the end, the government was forced to back down with their decision to enforce the implementation of the 50-50 policy due to intense resistance, and in 1979 the Education and Training Act No. 90 was passed, reducing the use of the mother tongue to 4 years of primary school followed by a choice of medium between Afrikaans and English (Hartshorne, 1992), with most schools opting for English medium. The reduction of the use of the mother tongue from 8 years to the practice of 4 years has, however, coincided with decreasing pass rates (cf table 6.1).

¹⁴⁰ The matriculation results are the school leaving examinations, which are taken in Grade 12.

Table 6.1: Pass rates at matriculation level

Year	African language-speaking students	% pass rate	Overall total nr. of candidates (%)
1955	595	43.5	
1976 (Soweto)	9595	83.7	
1979	14 574	73.5	85 276 (87%)
1980	29 973	53.2	109 807 (75%)
1982	70 241	48.4	139 488 (69%)
1992	342 038	44	448 491 (56%)
1994	392 434	49	495 408 (58%)
1997*	—	—	559 233 (47,4%)

(Source Heugh, 2002:187).

* After 1994, the matriculation results were no longer published according to a racial breakdown of the data as they were during apartheid. In 1997 the only data available was the overall number of candidates and the percentage pass rate for the total number of candidates. This was a move by the ANC-led government to do away with the ethnic divisions of apartheid.

In looking at the table we can see that there was an increase in the matriculation pass rate from 1992 which was 44% to 49% in 1994. In attempting to understand why the figure increased I sent an e-mail inquiry to Kathleen Heugh who replied as follows: “The previous government may have been trying to get things to look a bit better before the change over” (personal e-mail communication 04/01/05). Hence, the reliability of the data over those years is questionable. Furthermore, as noted above the matriculation results after 1994 were no longer published according to a racial/ethnic breakdown of the data. As a result only total pass rate figures are available for 1997. Heugh claims that roughly 80% of those who passed in 1997 were speakers of African languages and thus suggests a 10% decline in the pass rate from 1994-1997. However, there is no way to confirm this information and thus the conclusion by Heugh concerning the pass rate in 1997 should be interpreted as questionable. However, the figures from 1955-1992 do suggest that the language issue may have had some influence.

In analyzing the language-in-education policies that have been in effect up to the time of the 1994 elections, it is argued that for the speakers of African languages a number of different approaches have been applicable with different programs being utilized.

1. The pre- 1910 period can best be described as a *laissez-faire approach* to the language issue vis-à-vis the speakers of African languages. During this period the state was mainly concerned with education in general and language, specifically, with reference to the English- and Dutch-speaking settlers.
2. The period 1910-1948 was characterized by a struggle between the two white groups over the distribution of power and as a result the hegemony of the two official languages of the period, namely English and Afrikaans. Concerning the speakers of

- African languages it was found that since English had, for the most part, already been established in the mission schools (initially the only schools for African language speakers) then English would continue to dominate. Therefore, in this period a *transitional approach* namely an early-exit model was in effect, which Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) argues is a subtractive form of bilingual education.
3. During the apartheid period of 1948-1976 the policy in force was also a *transitional approach* for the speakers of African languages, but the model may also be defined first as a segregation model, given that this was the ideology behind the apartheid thinking. Simultaneously, it may also be described as a late-exit model in which the “linguistic minority children with a low-status mother tongue...[were] initially instructed through the medium of their mother tongue for a few years and where their mother tongue...[was] taught as though it has no intrinsic value, only an instrumental value” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:593) before making the transition (of course this was an abrupt transition) to another language, namely English although in theory it was to be both English and Afrikaans. If one then looks at the matriculation scores above, which show that during the period when the late-exit model was in effect the pass rate for speakers of African languages was much higher than when the early-exit model was in effect. It may be argued then that the late-exit programs are as the general rule states better than the early-exit ones because learners are allowed a better opportunity to become more proficient in their mother tongue by providing a greater foundation before making the transition to another language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). However, the fact still remains that in both late- and early-exit programs the ultimate goal is assimilation and a strong dominance in the majority language at the expense of the mother tongue.
 4. The declining years of apartheid 1977-1994 is still defined by a *transitional approach*; however, the model now in use is that which was also utilized in the pre-apartheid years. Thus an early-exit model becomes the de facto approach and although the events in Soweto were instrumental in influencing this change in the policy it would not become official until 1979. Here the policy, passed in 1979, then reduces the number of years that the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction from eight to four years with a choice thereafter of either English or Afrikaans, with most schools selecting English as the medium. Thus a subtractive language-learning situation results as opposed to an additive one.

The overall result is that for the most part African-language-speaking children have historically been exposed to a subtractive model of bilingual education (of course one could argue that from 1994 to the present this is still the case) while Afrikaans- and English-speaking children have been exposed to a dual-medium program “a limited version of additive bilingualism” (Heugh, 1995a:44). This dual-medium approach, one of the earliest forms of true additive bilingual education, was only offered to English- and Afrikaans-speaking pupils, but it was never an option for the speakers of African languages (Malherbe, 1977). Heugh argues that for the English- and Afrikaans-speaking pupils the L1 for the majority of students is maintained throughout their educational careers and that the L2 is then introduced as a subject alongside the L1. Had this type of program been available for African-language-speaking children with similar resources – sufficient materials and proficient bilingual

teachers – perhaps they might also have had the advantages of additive bilingualism. However, there are different environmental circumstances that need to be considered. While the whites (whether their first language is Afrikaans or English) have a lot of interaction and are often exposed to each other's languages both inside and outside of school that is not the same communicative situation (especially not an equal one) that blacks are in as they often are not exposed to i.e. English outside of school. However, the success of this dual-medium program relied, in part, upon the fact that qualified teachers of both languages were made available as well as other resources (Malherbe, 1977). Malherbe (1977:8) describes the ability to provide a true dual-medium program¹⁴¹ and the important role that teachers play in this as follows:

...in practice [this] depended entirely on the availability of completely bilingual teachers, particularly at the secondary level. As subsequent history showed, this condition proved the Achilles' heel of the dual-medium system. However, in the hands of bilingual teachers, particularly those brought up under such a system, it proved to have undoubted social as well as educational advantages for the children.

This description by Malherbe also has implications for this investigation as teachers involved in the study cite their own knowledge of English as problematic (cf 7.2.5 and 7.4), which then affects their ability to teach English as an additional language successfully.

As a result of this brief historical overview of the language issue in South Africa, it may be said that for approximately the past 200 years South Africa can be described as a bilingual country (Kamwangamalu, 2000) and characterized by a struggle between the dominance of English and Afrikaans combined with the disregard of other languages found within the country. For the most part the country's history up to the 1994 elections may be divided into two major periods concerning language issues. The first period was dominated by English-Afrikaans bilingualism from 1795-1948, when the British were in power. During the second period, from 1948-1994, when the Afrikaners were in power, Afrikaans-English bilingualism dominated (Kamwangamalu, 2000). The British Anglicization policy characterized the first

¹⁴¹ This dual-medium may also be referred to as two-way immersion (Vivian de Klerk, 2002b) or two-way bilingual (dual language) program (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:618) refers to Malherbe's (1946) evaluation study of the dual-medium English-Afrikaans program in South Africa noting that it showed excellent results in terms of bilingualism. Furthermore, Heugh (2002:186 fn95) suggests that "the practice of bilingual education in South Africa from the late 1800s and the study of Malherbe in the late 1930s and 1940s" (shows that the developments over the last two decades in the work by Cummins, Swain, Skutnabb-Kangas, Lambert and others) provided the initial experience for these researchers.

period and was resisted by the Afrikaners, while the African language speakers essentially accepted the dominance of English, whereas in the second period, referred to as *coerced bilingualism* (Kamwangamalu, 2000:52), the Afrikaners deliberately attempted to reduce the influence of English by their efforts to use both official languages in most areas of society, including the education sector. In education this was realized through the 1953 Bantu Education Act. Apartheid, through the use of Bantu Education, succeeded in achieving its goals (Heugh, 2002) and in doing so the language-in-education policy was a key component. The outcome was a segregated system with a language policy designed for separate development with unequal resources and an impoverished curriculum, which resulted in “the massive under-education of the majority of the population” (Heugh, 2002:172), the effects of which will be felt for years to come.

As Hartshorne (1995:314) notes, “in the period of negotiations (1990-3) prior to the installation of a democratic government in South Africa, the language debate took on a new vigor and a new relevance”. In this investigation it is believed that this period has had considerable influence on the outcome of both the Constitution and the LiEP and as a result it is important to review the different positions during this period.

6.3 Language policy in the new South Africa

Can there be genuine democracy in South Africa when prevailing post-apartheid institutions *continue* to foster forms of knowledge that *continue* to produce inequalities which *continue* to underprivilege the African majority? (Alidou and Mazrui, 1999:101 emphasis original).

The forms of knowledge that are developed have been built on European culture and tradition and delivered in European languages. “The forms of knowledge that could empower the underprivileged would have to be built on African culture and tradition and be delivered in African languages” (Brock-Utne, 2002b:1). Furthermore, if there is genuine concern for social justice and democracy this should lead African political leaders to work for a strengthening of the African languages. In Africa today education is looked upon as an institution that can and should contribute to the social transformation of African societies. Education is also part of the social systems requiring transformation and as a result there is the need to reconsider African education. What type of education is then necessary to contribute to the social

transformations necessary for Africa? More importantly, in what language should this education be given?

During the colonial era, the Western education that was brought to Africa, first by the missionaries and then by the colonial powers themselves, was Eurocentric and did not take the realities of Africa into consideration. As Dei (1994:9) maintains:

Only a few scholars would deny that colonial education in Africa was Eurocentric and ignored the achievements and contributions of the indigenous populations and their ancestries. Colonial education for the most part did not cultivate the African student's self-esteem and pride. Education in Africa today is still struggling to rid itself of this colonial legacy.

Dei (1994) believes that it is then necessary for African education to be based upon African indigenous culture, thus enabling that education to become a primary vehicle for social transformation. The indigenous culture referred to here has to do with the language issue and not necessarily indigenous culture in the sense of a culture that does not promote gender equality. Given that language is both a part of culture and the medium through which culture is transmitted, there should be serious consideration of the use of indigenous African languages as a viable medium of instruction in school. The policies that are ultimately adopted by governments have an influence not only on the curriculum but also on access to knowledge. By opting for a foreign medium of instruction many governments throughout Africa and other parts of the world deny large portions of their population access to knowledge.

When dealing with the issue of language policy for South Africa, Neville Alexander (1989) makes reference to Herbert Kelman who suggests that:

...the deliberate use of language policies for purposes of creating a national identity and of fostering sentimental attachment is usually not desirable. Rather, language policies ought to be designed to meet the needs and interests of all segments of the population effectively and equitably, thus, fostering instrumental attachments out of which sentimental ones can then gradually emerge...a sense of national identity is more likely to develop out of functional relationships within a society than out of deliberate attempts to promote it... (Kelman, 1971:48).

Based on the ideas expressed by Kelman, Alexander is of the belief that the main goal of language policy in South Africa should be to “facilitate communication between the different language groups that comprise the population of South Africa” so as to work against the effects of the apartheid language policy while simultaneously encouraging multilingualism (Alexander, 1989:52). The views expressed here by Alexander (1989) are echoed in the subsequent LiEP (cf 6.3.2), in particular the focus on multilingualism and the aim to facilitate communication and mutual understanding “across the barriers of colour, language and region” (DoE, 1997a:Section 4.1.3). This serves to support my argument that Alexander was one of the main actors involved in the development of the LiEP. This will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, which shows how many of Alexander’s ideas have been reflected in the policy product. Furthermore, in an attempt to redress the discrimination of the past and build a non-racial nation in South Africa the development of a new language-in-education policy was seen as vital.

In this section, informed by a critical approach, I will look at the development of the current LiEP. I will review and analyze the documents and various political initiatives that have influenced the LiEP and subsequently analyze the LiEP document.

6.3.1 Negotiating the future

In an effort to critically analyze the policy developments leading up to and including the LiEP, I begin by reviewing a number of policy developments and draft documents concerning the language issue not only from the ANC but also the NP (the political party in power before the 1994 elections and subsequently part of the government of national unity). Although my main focus is on language policy in relation to education, I also discuss the language question from the societal level as well, given that these are two related areas and cannot be looked at in isolation. In analyzing documents I have attempted to account for the relationship between discourse and social power (van Dijk, 1996). Such an analysis “should describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions” (van Dijk, 1996:84). An important dimension of this is the patterns of access to discourse (cf chapter 5 for this framework). Thus a number of important questions are explored: “Who may speak or write to whom, about what, when and in what context, or who may participate in such communicative events in various recipient roles” (van Dijk,

1996:86)? More importantly for this research: Whose opinions were able to influence public policy and who was involved in these policy decisions? What was included in the various documents leading up to the LiEP and what was excluded?

Early in the 1990s the ANC began to review their position on language policy. The initial work on this began with a Language Workshop in Harare, held on 21-24 March 1990. Present at this was Zubeida Desai who was serving as the Western Cape representative of the National Educational Coordinating Committee (NECC). In discussing the various political events leading up to the development of the LiEP she commented that only invited representatives were in attendance (personal communication August 2003). The planning of this workshop and decisions about time and place came from the ANC. In addition, with reference to who was allowed or obliged to participate, it is clear that only those invited representatives were present and thus other more independent individual voices were absent, resulting in the absence of alternative viewpoints. This absence of alternative viewpoints is apparent in the reluctance to allow the presence of people like Kathleen Heugh, who was with the National Language Project (NLP) and the editor of the Language Projects Review who made a request to attend the Workshop in order to report on the proceedings. Heugh explains that since she was “not a card carrying member of the ANC – I did not expect to be able to make a contribution” (e-mail communication: Heugh, 04/01/05). Kathleen Heugh informs me that her request was refused and that she was never given a direct reason and that the weekend before the meeting she was finally given the following invitation by David Brown: “you can come if you really want to”. Heugh explains that “I did not see it as an adequate invitation and did not go” (e-mail communication: Heugh, 04/01/05). However, it is also important to point out that by having the workshop outside of South Africa those ANC members still in exile were able to be present and thus their contributions were considered. In fact Desai¹⁴² informed me that she put together a report (Desai, 1990) of papers from those in exile for the NECC, as “these were not available to those persons within South Africa at the time” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02). It is important to note that many of those ANC members in exile were educated in English-speaking countries and, therefore, they were influenced by their experiences in exile. It might be argued that these political leaders then may have been more inclined to accept the hegemony of English as for them English was seen as the language of power and thus an investment, which had the potential of making them powerful. Ideologically those who are

¹⁴² Desai (forthcoming) provides an inside view of her involvement in the development of language policy in South Africa since 1991.

proficient in English are in possession of invaluable *cultural capital* which will lead the way to prestige and power, not to mention individual progress. In responding to a question concerning the use of African languages by political leaders, Neville Alexander makes a similar suggestion pointing to both the hegemony of English and the fact that many of the political leaders spent several years in exile. Likewise Alexander brings in his own experience and how he had to modify his own thinking:

“He [referring to Mbeki] very seldom does it [speaks in an African language] and I really think he only does it when he has to, only in the rural areas and he feels very uncomfortable. Of course you can understand he was in exile for a very long time where as Mandela spoke Xhosa all the time, on Robben Island. We were trained as “coloreds” we were molded in a European/Eurocentric manner and it took a massive re-education on my part to reorient myself towards Africa, not in the sense of Africanism but actually in the sense of understanding where we are living and who we are in those terms. So I can understand the problems that a chap like Umbeki has, but you are not going to fire up the youth if you don’t somehow project more of an African image, an African reality. The discourse, they are so negligent about discourse even a modish fashionable thing like African Renaissance even the word Renaissance in my view is problematical if you are talking about Africa. If you had used the Shona word like Shimoranga it has also that meaning of development, of struggling or call it a rebirth but its more struggle and it’s African. If you had used a word like Shimoranga then people would have started looking what is Shimoranga what is this and where does it come from” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02).

Here Alexander not only questions the hegemony of English, but also the discourse used within the society and how political leaders may often overlook it. Ngũgĩ (1987:3) makes a similar point:

The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples’ languages rather than their own.

Hartshorne (1992:209) argues, “given the past history of South Africa...and the divisiveness of previous language policies as applied under apartheid, it is very clear that ANC language policy...will have to lean towards unity rather than to diversity”. He notes that in the Harare Language Workshop there were indications of this trend which I believe favored English as a means of achieving this goal, as one delegate noted:

In building a unified South Africa, a new government may have to select a national language. In a multi-lingual context such as South Africa, a linking or common language is essential...Choosing any particular African language, on the other hand, carries a high source of potential conflict, since it will elevate one cultural group above others (Benjamin 1990 cited in Hartshorne, 1992:209).¹⁴³

Furthermore Hartshorne argues that in the NECC report on the Harare Workshop there appeared to be no discussion paper from an African language speaker. He then asks if this is again “a signal that decisions are going to be taken *for* the ordinary parent” (Hartshorne, 1992:217fn23 emphasis added). However, there were alternative views expressed which focused on the neglect of African languages maintaining that “indigenous languages should be developed and actively promoted for the purposes of medium of instruction” founded on the belief that “no person should be prevented from gaining access to economic, social and political life because of the language she/he spoke” (Desai, 1990:27).

Following this workshop a Language Commission was established in 1991. The responsibility of the Commission was to inform and consult with the public on matters pertaining to language (Crawhill, 1993 cited in Alexander & Heugh, 1999:11). The Commission, serving as a substructure of the ANC’s Department of Arts and Culture, published a document entitled *African National Congress Policy Considerations* (ANC, 1992b) that contained the following:

(T)he ANC supports the deliberate fostering of multilingualism in schools, adult education programmes, in the workplace and in all sectors of public life...Though language experts argue that initial education is best conducted through the ‘mother tongue’..., large sections of black urban communities have already pressurised primary schools into beginning with English as the medium of instruction from day one...Any language policy must reflect the voice of the people and this voice is more important than any model which emerges (cited in Alexander & Heugh, 1999:11).

The ambiguity of this statement is argued as reflecting the broader societal context, at the time, regarding English in relation to the African languages (Alexander & Heugh, 1999). It appears from this statement that the ANC made the assumption that since parents were putting pressure on schools to use English from early on, that they are opting for English medium as opposed to mother tongue. However, it may also be noted that parents are often uninformed

¹⁴³ It is not clear from Hartshorne’s referencing whether this statement, made by Jean Benjamin, is taken directly from the conference itself (if he was present and wrote it down) or if it is found in one of the conference reports. In the list of references in his book there is no listing of this reference directly. Thus I refer to Hartshorne in citing this information.

and, therefore, these decisions may be based on a variety of reasons. In an interesting study carried out by Vivian de Klerk (2002a:6)¹⁴⁴ she notes several reasons why middle-class black parents choose to send their children to English-medium schools, with one of the main reasons being *better resourced learning environments* topping the list above, for example, *English being seen as a prestigious language* or *English as offering more economic advantages*. This then shows that parents opt for English medium for a variety of reasons and that no single reason should be assumed. On a similar note, Heugh (2002) examines the issue of parents opting for English or English only, which she refers to as a myth about public perceptions. It has been argued that English has found favor with those disenfranchised, in particular those within the liberation movement (as suggested by the previous historical discussion) from the early years of the twentieth century (Alexander, 1989). In addition, English does play a significant role in international communication, higher levels in the educational sector and in the economy, which will most likely continue (Heugh, 2002). However, despite this high value accorded to English this does not “negate an attachment to indigenous languages in a multilingual society” (Heugh, 2002:180).

In her paper Heugh (2002:181) cites how “the misreading of language use at ‘the chalk face’ in South African schools...” contributes “to the building of an inaccurate perception of the role of English or the changing role and use of English in schools”. She refers to a paper by Ridge (1996) where he suggests that when parents were offered a choice of medium of instruction a significant number of black parents opted for English medium from as early as Grade 1. Ridge cited Edusource Data News and maintained that this was the case in 43% of schools. What Heugh (2002) points out is that the data cited by Ridge does not represent a cross-section of the schools in the country and that the questionnaire used to collect the data was filled out by individual teachers and not schools. Heugh argues that in reality what the data showed was that 43% of the teachers surveyed taught through the medium of English and that these teachers did not comprise a representative cross-section of teachers across the country. Consequently, Heugh declares that the Edusource document clearly states that only 4% and not 43% of schools had introduced English earlier than Grade 4 after 1990. Moreover, she cites PANSALB’s (2001:18 cited in Heugh, 2002:180) own statement that “the use of English as a medium of instruction¹⁴⁵ from the first grade has not been possible nor has it

¹⁴⁴ In this thesis I have 2 references from Vivian de Klerk in 2002 and 1 from Gerda de Klerk 2002. For the sake of clarity I use first and last names when citing these two researchers as the articles referred to are all from 2002.

¹⁴⁵ cf 7.5 for a discussion concerning parental choice of medium of instruction.

been attempted in the majority of schools in these areas [many of the former Bantustans and other areas with a majority black population] especially since English does not function as a *lingua franca* in these areas”.

Thus far with reference to van Dijk’s (1996) framework the dominant position of English and the argument for maintaining the status quo appears to be rationalized in terms of the practice as being ‘natural’, ‘inevitable’ or even implied as ‘democratic’. Additionally, the role played by the Language Commission, as discussed by Alexander and Heugh (1999), in the development of future ANC policy decisions concerning language issues fed into the ANC’s *Ready to Govern* document (ANC, 1992a), combined with the influence the ANC may have had on other initiatives such as the NECC and NEPI, both of which had a great influence on subsequent policy proposals.

In commenting on the clauses on language rights in the ANC’s *Bill of Rights for a New South Africa* (1990) a noteworthy and independent contribution to the Constitutional Committee was made by Robin Trew and Zubeida Desai (1992). I initially found this document referred to by Alexander and Heugh (1999). However, I received an updated version from one of the authors (Zubeida Desai) where the reference is then changed to Trew and Desai (1992) as opposed to Desai and Trew (1992) in the version referred to by Alexander and Heugh (1999). Furthermore, in their paper Alexander and Heugh (1999) note that the contribution from Trew and Desai came from within the ANC. However, Zubeida Desai informed me (personal communication, July 2003) that at the time of this contribution neither she nor Robin Trew were ANC members and therefore it was an independent and outside contribution. In addition, Desai contends that the argument presented in the paper by her and Trew was not arguing the language-as-a-resource paradigm, which Alexander and Heugh (1999) claim, rather it viewed language as a resource that people might possess. Thus Alexander and Heugh (1999) may have read too much into this contribution perhaps being influenced by their own opinions, concepts, interests, and ideologies (cf 4.2.1). In this paper a distinction was made between what Alexander and Heugh (1999) describe as passive and positive rights. Therefore, by adopting a strong position on effecting rights (positive rights), citizens could be protected from “exclusion from effective participation in public debate and to inequitable enjoyment of public services, justice, education, power and economic advancement” (Trew & Desai, 1992:5). This was a significant statement in the document, which could have signaled a shift in the thinking within the ANC had it been given serious consideration, signifying an

approach to rights by also acknowledging language as a resource and not just as “a potential marker of social groups” (Trew & Desai, 1992:5).

Language rights need to deal both with what Chinua Achebe¹⁴⁶ has called “the unassailable position of English”, and with the fact that African languages are the primary linguistic resource of most South Africans (Trew & Desai, 1992:5).

Despite this opportunity to shift their thinking, Alexander and Heugh (1999:11) argue that the standpoint of the “more powerful forces within the ANC lay with the ambivalent position” that is found in the ANC’s “Language Policy Considerations”. Although Trew and Desai had relatively easy access (van Dijk, 1996) to the ANC’s “Bill of Rights” their power to effect changes in the political standpoint on language issues was relatively low given that their contribution, at the time, appeared to have little influence in the ANC’s policy position. When I asked Desai for her opinion of why this contribution seemed to have little influence she replied that “political actors ultimately determine policy and not technical experts” like herself and Trew (e-mail communication: Desai, 30/12/04).

In reviewing the ANC’s position on language issues before 1990 I examined a number of draft documents that highlight that within the ANC there was a strong bias towards English, which has been equally noted by other researchers (there are a number of researchers that are critical of the ANC’s bias towards English and space limitations do not allow me the opportunity to discuss them all in detail). It is interesting to note that English has always served as the ANC’s working language from its conception in 1912 to the present. Even in the ANC school in Tanzania (the ANC ran a school in Tanzania during the years that they were banned in South Africa), English was the medium of instruction from preschool through to the secondary level and even adult literacy classes were concerned with literacy in English (Hartshorne, 1992). The question that needs to be considered is that given this strong and clear bias towards English in the earlier ANC documents is this bias towards English still present in the ANC’s thinking? Although the specific mention of English was subsequently dropped from the LiEP one may wonder how much earlier documents influence the actual ideology and practice of the ANC led government. Additionally, Alexander and Heugh (1999:8) acknowledge that the National Language Project (NLP), which they were both

¹⁴⁶ Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian novelist and Trew and Desai (1992:5) refer to this quote from him taken from a speech entitled “The African Writer and the English Language”, which is originally cited in Ngũgĩ (1987:7).

greatly involved in, “believed that English would function as a lingua franca or linking language”. However, by 1992 the NLP’s approach to ESL had been modified based on language research on the continent (cf Heine, 1992; also the work of Cummins and Skutnabb-Kangas influenced this change).

McLean (1999:12) cites Hirson (1981) who argues that in a move to “unite black leadership, there was no other lingua franca, and English was almost always used at meetings”. Furthermore, I agree with McLean’s argument that the opposition to Afrikaans combined with the use of English as a common language has helped to structure the response of African language speakers both in the past and to the present day. Thus as it has been argued (cf chapters 4 & 5) power abuse not only involves abuse of force; it may also affect the minds of people (van Dijk, 1996). In other words the pattern of power emerging in the new democratic South Africa may be described as persuasive and manipulative rather than coercive. The discourse used in opposition of apartheid and, therefore, of Afrikaans played a crucial role in manufacturing the consent of the people (van Dijk, 1996) and the consent here is the acceptance of English as a viable option or even the only option. Rahman (2001:59) compellingly describes such consent:

The language of power is not the spoken language of everyday life and, therefore, has to be learned. This language has certain characteristics: it is a standardized variety of a language; it is a print language; it is highly valued; it is not spoken by the common people; it is an elitist possession. Not only is it a standardized language in the sense of possessing fixed spellings, written grammars, dictionaries, and printing conventions but it is also used by the ruling elite in the domains of power. The use of a language in such domains by the modern state, or “language rationalization”, is a matter for the ruling elite to decide.

Furthermore, Rahman argues that the functional use of a language such as English is often equated with “superiority” and maintains that this is an evaluative term and suggests that it is something that we can do without as long as we remain at the theoretical level. However, he argues that people do not live on a theoretical level, but rather on a practical level and thus use evaluative terms for everything including language. Rahman (2001:59-60) suggests that “the non standardized varieties of a language, or non standardized languages, are generally given less prestige than the standardized ones¹⁴⁷ even by their own speakers. This is not because of the nature of the language but because of its use in the domains of power”. As a result the

¹⁴⁷ Nomlomo (1993) provides a good example of this attitude by Xhosa speakers and its effects on education.

acceptance of English is not necessarily based on the language, but rather on the power it may provide those who are proficient in it. Additionally, Alexander and Heugh (1999) point out that the African leadership in many ways accepted the status quo and the hegemony of English. It is interesting that the bias towards the use of English as a viable option in education was not only found in the ANC's thinking at the time (cf NEPI, 1992; ANC, 1992a, 1994), as the following example discussed by Alexander and Heugh (1999) demonstrates. Furthermore, it is important to note that the ANC is a political party and not all members share the same view towards language (my focus is of course not on individuals, but on social groups, institutions or organizations). For example, in several interviews I have conducted the then current Minister, Dr. Ben Ngubane, of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology is described as "understanding the language issue and recognizing the important role that language plays" (interviews: Neville Alexander, 25/02/02 and Zubeida Desai, 14/03/02). However, Dr. Ngubane is a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and from early on this party had a different ideology towards the issue of language than the ANC. The IFP initially saw African languages as being extremely important and originally proposed that the African languages should be the only official languages.

Tragically, the anglocentrism of the political, and to some extent of the cultural, leadership of the oppressed people in effect, if not in intention, ensured the predictable outcome of the rulers' policies. For it is a sad fact that the African (or black) nationalist movement did not react to cultural oppression in a manner similar to that of the Afrikaner (or white) nationalists. At the critical time when Bantu education was being imposed on the black people, the leadership of the liberation movement across the board made a de facto decision to oppose Afrikaans in favour of English. The option of promoting the African languages while also ensuring as wide and as deep a knowledge as possible of the English language was never considered seriously for reasons connected with the class aspirations of that leadership. In effect, therefore, the hegemony of English, its unassailable position...became entrenched among black people. Because it was the only other language that could compete with Afrikaans as a means to power (jobs and status) and as the only means to international communication and world culture at the disposal of South Africa's elites, it became, as in other African countries, the "language of liberation" (Alexander & Heugh, 1999:6-7).

This acceptance of English is particularly highlighted in two ANC draft documents. Before proceeding, it is important to highlight the question of where one discourse ends and the other begins. The discourses of much of the policy documents of the ANC show two types of characteristics: they are parasitic (dependent upon other discourses) and opportunistic (seizing upon powerful idioms that are available). Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) suggests that such

features may be described as a more general property of intertextuality, where one text draws upon another. Thus it is possible to see how the discourses associated with the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa were being displaced and appropriated by other discourses. With reference to policy documents on language these are seen as sets of 'intertextually' related discourses (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). As such these written discourses are seen as an intertextually related sequence of texts. Moreover, in one of the documents this intertextual relationship is explicitly stated. Therefore, the ensuing LiEP is seen as intertextually related not only to ANC draft documents but also to other political party draft documents on language as well (this will be discussed in detail later in this chapter). As such, in the development of the LiEP we are able to see how the different positions of the various policy actors are ultimately revealed in the politics of compromise and negotiation.

The first of the ANC draft documents entitled *Ready to Govern: Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa* (ANC, 1992a) is in essence the ANC's policy guidelines adopted at their National Conference 28-31 May 1992. Before examining the specific examples taken from this policy document, it is important to note that this conference was the first ANC national conference to be held inside South Africa since 1959 and thus may have allowed for a number of people to be present that were not able to attend, for example, the Harare Workshop. However, only ANC delegates from the various regions were in attendance and thus representation was confined to political members only. Certainly it is not expected that political parties invite non-members to their annual general meetings, but given the influence that these draft documents had on subsequent policy documents, this factor needs to be at least recognized. As a result the views represented in the ensuing document were for the most part reflective of the beliefs of ANC political party members. The result is that access was controlled given that the ANC made the decisions about who was allowed to participate and who was excluded.

To begin with, the pull towards English coupled with the recognition of the practical constraints involved in implementing a policy which gave official status to eleven languages was highlighted in the *Ready to Govern* document in which attention is drawn to the competing interests that were at work:

To overcome the practical problems of multi-lingualism, it will be possible to designate a single common language to be used for record purposes or for other

special use, either at the national level or in the regions. All the major languages spoken in our country should be equally available for such purposes (in alphabetical order – Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu (ANC, 1992a:O (3)).

Here the language diversity found in the country was noticeably viewed as a problem,¹⁴⁸ which was to be solved by designating a single **common** language for use at the national and provincial levels. The underlying assumption was that English would serve this function and that it would become the language of government. This was also echoed by Alexander who notes “the creeping unilingualism in the Civil Service” which he believes is, in part, “a result of globalization and also the result of an anti-Afrikaans attitude amongst black speakers of African languages”, which influences the belief that “English alone is enough” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02 emphasis original).

Under education section K (4)¹⁴⁹ the ANC proclaims (ANC, 1992a):

- K4.1 We recognize 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.
- K4.2 We are committed to providing access to a minimum of two languages – a regional lingua franca and *English*. In cases where, firstly, there is more than one regional lingua franca access will be provided to each except where not possible because of *practical constraints*; and secondly, where the home language of the student differs from the regional lingua franca, access to the mother tongue will be provided *except where impractical* (emphasis added).

In section K (4.1) it is clearly stated that we, as the representatives of the ANC, acknowledge South Africa’s multilingual reality. However, the we stated in K(4.1) is also reflective of those participating in the conference, which as previously noted was limited to ANC representatives only. This is then followed by the modal auxiliary verb must, which may indicate a wide range of moods including *intent*, *belief* or *necessity* for all individuals to have access not only to the mother tongue, but also to a language of wider communication (LWC). However, by leaving ambiguous how access is to be promoted in the mother tongue while

¹⁴⁸ From this point I have chosen to underline certain words in the documents being analyzed in order to emphasize the discourse evident in the documents. Underlining the words helps to point out the important issues in the documents along with some of the implicit ideology. Additionally, I have put some words in bold to further highlight certain words. The words that are underlined in the interview material, however, represent an emphasis placed on these words by the respondents during the interviews.

¹⁴⁹ In the NEPI report this section is referred to as J (4) and not K (4). However, the version I am using was retrieved online in July 2002 and it is the final revised version. The NEPI was most likely using the initial draft version in their report, which may explain discrepancies between the numbering.

simultaneously providing access to an LWC, this suggests no more than a symbolic gesture towards the promotion of African languages as a realistic option. The result is effectively preserving the status quo (cf chapter 7 for the actual outcome).

This section is followed by K (4.2) in which the ANC states that they are then committed to providing this access to a minimum of two languages. However, it has been suggested again that the use of the term access is vague and that it can indicate that a particular language be taught as a subject or used as medium of instruction (NEPI, 1992). Furthermore, obligation on the part of the ANC is suggested not only for a regional language that is specifically stated in section K(4.2) as opposed to the mother tongue noted in section K(4.1), but also to English, which is explicitly mentioned and indicates that the ANC then commit themselves to providing access to this language. The contradiction that exists within this document combined with the explicit reference to a LWC specifically mentioning English suggests only a symbolic commitment to the use of African languages resulting in the perpetuation of the status quo. Additionally, the use of the term regional lingua franca suggests this could also indicate the use of Afrikaans as opposed to an African language (NEPI, 1992:37) and as such in reality English and Afrikaans could still be given preference over and above the African languages.

Moreover, Desai mentions that only a few key people were asked to comment on the document (personal communication, July 2003), which does not include the voices of those oppressed. Thus their access as suggested by van Dijk (1996) is passive at best given that they may have been topics of the political talk, but simultaneously they have no influence over their representation in this political discourse. This suggests then that the use of the “language planning from below” model proposed by Alexander (1989, 1992) was not utilized as those involved were mainly policy-makers, political activists and academics (cf 6.3.2).

Between December 1990 and August 1992 the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) undertook a large-scale study on behalf of the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC). The aim of the investigation was to integrate policy options in all areas of education. The investigation resulted in thirteen individual books with each covering a major educational sector. Of particular interest to this investigation is the volume on “Language” (NEPI, 1992). The report does not make recommendations for a new model of education, but rather is “an analysis of feasible options for the short- to medium-term future”

(NEPI, 1992:vi). The NEPI Report was also instrumental in signaling a shift that “whatever the policy, it should facilitate additive rather than subtractive bilingualism” (NEPI, 1992:89) as the goal. The report thus moves away from transitional models of language education towards additive approaches. In the report there are also a number of aspects that are of interest for this investigation. The report includes a glossary of terms in which second language (L2) is described as follows:

A language which is acquired or learned after gaining some competence in a first language. Usually it is not used in the learner’s home, but it is used in the wider society in which the learner lives. However, there are vast discrepancies in the extent to which different learners are exposed to a ‘second language’. In some cases, what is termed a ‘second language’ may in effect be a ‘foreign language’, because the learner has no exposure to the language outside the classroom (NEPI, 1992:xi).

What is interesting is that the report then recognized the varying realities present in South Africa in relation to language acquisition already in 1992 by acknowledging this difference (cf my discussion in 4.6.2). However, the report does not elaborate to any extent on this situation, which I argue was a missed opportunity to look at possible options based on this particular difference in realities. In an interview¹⁵⁰ with Zubeida Desai, one of the authors of the report, she states that “there was a lot of input that went into the report from other people and that it was a compromise with others”. The report was written by Kay McCormick, Sydney Zotwana and Zubeida Desai. In an interview with Zubeida Desai she comments that the report was limited given the time constraints and that it did not reflect only the view of the authors, but was a product of a large group of researchers (interview: Desai, 14/03/02). The report also had a set format that it needed to look at all the options, which did not necessarily reflect the views of those writing it (interview between Niedrig and Desai, 1996). Desai’s own view is reflected in her response to a document entitled *Towards a Language Policy in Education* from 1996 sent to the Department of Education in which she argues that there is the need to “take into account that the context varies from area to area”...and that “a model that might work for one context could be hopelessly inadequate in another” (Desai, 1996:2). In this way Desai’s argument elaborates on the contextual differences mentioned in the NEPI

¹⁵⁰ The interview referred to here was not conducted by me. I received a transcript of this interview from Zubeida Desai. Heike Niedrig conducted it in 1996 as part of her PhD (Niedrig, 2000). I subsequently interviewed Zubeida Desai in 2002 at which time I focused on other questions since much of the NEPI and some issues relating to PANSALB were already covered in the interview by Heike. Subsequently I have received permission from both Desai and Niedrig to use the interview transcript from the 1996 interview, which I will use in addition to the interview I conducted with Desai in 2002. Thus the interview from 1996 was between Niedrig and Desai and the one from 2002 was the interview I conducted with Desai.

report found in the glossary with reference to second language. Additionally, Desai comments that it was recognized that the report does not endorse African languages very strongly, but that they were told that an advocacy approach should not be adopted (interview between Niedrig and Desai, 1996). As such the communicative event was controlled by the NECC who commissioned the report (van Dijk, 1996).

The NECC was an umbrella structure created in the mid-1980s and it joined the United Democratic Front (UDF) as the ANC was banned at the time. The United Democratic Front's launch was in Cape Town in 1983 and was attended by delegates of over 565 organizations from three of the UDF's strongholds: Cape Town, Natal and the (former) Transvaal (Worden, 1994). There were also a few affiliates from the Eastern and Southern Cape, the Cape West Coast, the (former) Orange Free State, as well as a delegation from the Border region. At the peak of the UDF membership in 1987, there were some 700 local, regional and national affiliates. These affiliate organizations then, represented a wide spectrum geographically and socially. What united them was more than just their common opposition to the constitutional reforms of the apartheid government. Activists who were either supporters or clandestine members of the African National Congress led most affiliates. As such it can be argued that the UDF was closely affiliated with the ANC and subsequently this affiliation might have had some influence on the NECC. Furthermore, there are those who suggest that the ANC not only supported the NEPI initiative, but was also involved in it (Hartshorne, 1992). The NECC thus signaled that an approach promoting the African languages should not be utilized. However, Desai states that the report does look at the "different options, and under what conditions it can work and under what conditions it cannot work" (interview between Niedrig and Desai, 1996). Although the NEPI report does look at several options, my own analysis of the report shows that the option most seriously considered was a transitional model, which promotes subtractive as opposed to additive bilingualism. Additionally the transitional model is argued for in several areas throughout the report cf pages 43, 50. Also in the report the term *delayed immersion* is used but in reality it is a transitional approach that is described.

There are different models of bilingual medium of instruction. The World Bank, in 1988, advocated a model which uses L1 and L2 media of instruction transitionally, as a stage in progress towards a monolingual medium of instruction in a language of wider communication. This is probably the model which would be most widely acceptable (NEPI, 1992:90).

Moreover, as suggested above, the NEPI adopted a model of education based on the thinking found in the World Bank, an institution that is seen as promoting the use of the mother tongue as a means only to ease the transition to European languages¹⁵¹ (Brock-Utne, 2000a). Heugh's (1995a:49) analysis of the NEPI also supports my findings in which she argues that "if South Africa allows aid agencies to influence educational policy then additive bilingual/multilingual education will not be available to all sectors of the population". Furthermore, one of the policy options discussed in the report in which an indigenous language is used as the main medium of instruction (NEPI, 1992:52-54) is only briefly presented and my analysis concludes that this model was never really given serious consideration in relation to the other options discussed. However, as already mentioned by Desai, an advocacy approach was not to be adopted, furthermore highlighting only the symbolic consideration of the African languages while English was seen as the only viable option. Thus was not only the communicative event controlled by the ANC in collaboration with the NECC, but also the outcome. This suggests that the minds of the recipients were accessed, as the ANC and the NECC were able to control the knowledge represented in the report (van Dijk, 1996).

Additionally, the opposition between the apartheid state and the liberation movement, which was far from resolved, was ruptured as policy imperatives shifted from confrontation to negotiation. "Out of this rupture other dichotomies have come to the fore: between equity and growth, democracy and development, centre and periphery, rural and urban and tradition and modernity" (Deacon & Parker, 1998:135). One could also add between rich and poor thus acknowledging the urban divide. The compromises made by both the ANC and the NP were "intended to both permit identity and accommodate diversity, and strike a balance between centralized and decentralized school governance" (Deacon & Parker, 1998:133).

The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS)¹⁵² represented the policy discourse of the reforming apartheid bureaucracy, politically aligned with the National Party. The ERS proposed that a restructured system should provide freedom of choice, equal opportunities and a balance between commonality and diversity (Deacon & Parker, 1998). Balancing administrative centralization, and national standards, against the decentralization of power to local

¹⁵¹ Brock-Utne (2000a:chapter 5) provides an excellent analysis of the World Bank's position on language of instruction along with an analysis of the use of aid by bilateral donors to strengthen their languages as medium of instruction (cf Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1996).

¹⁵² The ERS was a final attempt by the National Party government to reform the education system before they lost power, but this document did not specifically deal with language issues and instead these were dealt with in a document known as *A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa* (CMSA).

communities or individual institutions would enable schools to be differentiated according to particular values, locale, religion, language and culture – in fact, any criteria except race. The ERS's advocacy of decentralization was a significant shift from the emphasis during the heyday of apartheid where multiple, separate and unequal educational institutions constituting different racial identities were imposed from a centralized system. This decentralization initiative was incorporated into the post-apartheid policy and is reflected in the South African Schools Act (1996). I will discuss the implications of this decentralization in more detail later in this chapter. In general, it is argued that the ERS “was an attempt to rescue what it could of apartheid education by promoting a kind of ‘apartheid from below’, to maintain identities (and inequalities of power) established on the basis of ‘free association’...” and to “...provide a significant number of predominantly white and semi-privatized local schools with control over the collection and distribution of their own financial and other resources” (Deacon & Parker, 1998:137).

In addition, Deacon and Parker (1998) find it ironic that the answer to the main question the ERS attempted to answer was indirectly reiterated in the NEPI investigation. The ERS attempted to justify differences and inequalities within a single education system, which was also the problem facing the NEPI study. However, the NEPI approach to this dilemma was not as one of freedom of association, found in the ERS, but rather one of development (Deacon & Parker, 1998). The NEPI also no longer viewed the state as the enemy but as themselves representing the views of a powerful set of interests (NEPI, 1992). These researchers maintain that the NEPI constituted itself around the tension between the demand for equity, signifying the importance of redressing historical inequalities, and the need for development, understood as economic growth and modernization through reintegration into the world economy (NEPI, 1992). This reintegration into the world economy may also help to explain the emphasis placed on the role of English. As David Crystal (1997) argues a language becomes an international language for one chief reason: the political power of its peoples. As Rahman (2001:61) maintains:

Westernised elites know that they will acquire positions in the higher bureaucracy, commissions in the officer corps of the armed forces, and increasingly jobs in NGOs, international organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations, if they have command over English. Thus they spend enormous amounts on teaching good English¹⁵³ to their children. Languages of power, then, are an “investment

¹⁵³ See also Phillipson (1992) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000).

item"...They are invested into because they have the potential of making one powerful.

Subsequently, a draft document entitled *A Policy Framework for Education and Training* was published in January 1994 (ANC, 1994). In the document there is an acknowledgement first of all in part 1 (3.2) that it is founded on the *Ready to Govern* document (ANC, 1992a) and as such is an intertextually related discourse (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1998).

Our proposed policy framework for education and training below builds on the guidelines adopted by the ANC Policy Conference in May 1992, and contained in the document *Ready to Govern* (ANC, 1994: section 1(3.2)).

This 1994 policy framework document is divided into seven parts and sets out the ANC's proposals on education and training. The following points contained in part 5 chapter 12 under the heading "Language in Education Policy" are of relevance (ANC, 1994:61):

...official language policy in South Africa has been interwoven with the politics of domination and separation, resistance and affirmation. Over the past two centuries, South Africa's colonial and white minority government have used language policy in education as an instrument of cultural and political control...the official language or languages of the state have been elevated and other South African languages have been either suppressed or marginalised. Language oppression has in turn provoked popular struggle...Such struggles have been waged by Afrikaners against British cultural and political imperialism, and by Blacks against Afrikaner-dominated white baasskap.

What is interesting in this excerpt is how social actors are represented to suit their interests and purposes with reference to the intended readers (van Leeuwen, 1996). The dichotomy between domination and separation on the one hand and the resistance and affirmation on the other is representative of an "us" versus "them" portrayal, where the ANC is represented by resistance and affirmation and the white Afrikaner minority is equated with domination and separation. However, in this introduction the ANC acknowledges only the language struggle between the Afrikaners and British on the one hand and black South Africans and the Afrikaners on the other. Any oppression by the British of the Africans in relation to language issues is **not** discussed (cf chapter 2 and 6.2). This reflects the criticism presented earlier (Alexander & Heugh, 1999:6) and suggests that the "African (or black) nationalist movement did not react to cultural oppression in a manner similar to that of the Afrikaner (or white) nationalists" and that they apparently accepted the dominant position of English at the expense of the African languages. The document does, however, go on to acknowledge the

previous official status of only two languages, namely English and Afrikaans, and highlights the fact that “African South Africans have effectively been denied the right to choose¹⁵⁴ the terms of their linguistic participation in public life and education” (ANC, 1994:61). However, given the previous exclusion in acknowledging the hegemony of English this sentence appears to argue that the right to choose applies to English in opposition to Afrikaans, which previous policies attempted to enforce (cf 6.2). Thus the document draws on the apartheid discourse that denied speakers of African languages the right to choose. In addition, it draws attention to the issue of power in which “the effect of South Africa’s official language in education policies has been to promote one-way communication, on terms set by the white minority” (ANC, 1994:61). The document while acknowledging the power relations that have existed historically falls short of making any significant recommendations that will alter this situation.

Interestingly enough neither the ANC draft policy nor the ensuing LiEP¹⁵⁵ make provisions to change this in any concrete way, for example by requiring that all students should study at least one African language. What is of interest is, however, that the government’s¹⁵⁶ CMSA document made specific recommendations that “African languages shall be studied by all children for a minimum of three years” (NEPI, 1992:37). All children should ideally mean also white South African children. This recommendation was, however, never followed up as the status and functions of African languages have not yet been given serious practical consideration to any degree by generations of black leadership (here the emphasis is on the ANC as it has been and still is the main political party representing the black majority). This is echoed by Alexander and Heugh (1999:6) who argue, “that none of the representative organizations of the oppressed people or their leadership was able to transcend the limits of the dominant paradigm within which the language policy of the Union and of the Republic of South Africa was conceived and formulated”.

In addition, in the document under the section “democratic consultation” (ANC, 1994:63) a number of issues are of importance. It is stated that “languages of learning and institutional

¹⁵⁴ Again the underlined emphasis is added by me in analyzing this document to highlight certain points of interest.

¹⁵⁵ This document will be discussed and analyzed in detail later in this chapter.

¹⁵⁶ Here I am referring to the NP government and their policy documents concerning education immediately before the 1994 elections, which reflect a final effort by the NP to reform some of the apartheid structures.

languages should be determined on the basis of democratic consultation” and that these decisions should be guided by certain criteria (ANC, 1994:63-64):

- Non-discrimination: institutional language policy should not be used as a mechanism for exclusion.
- Reasonableness: the material and human resources required to support the choice of particular languages should be taken into account.
- Co-ordination of choice within a given area: in order to support as wide a range of language choices as is required by communities living in a given area, it may be necessary to organize the negotiation of choice at the level of ‘catchment’ areas, rather than at the level of individual schools or institutions.
- Periodic review of choice: institutional language policy should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the continued relevance of the policy, given that the linguistic requirements of the school or institutional community may change with time.

The first criterion with reference to non-discrimination concerning exclusion is seen as a reaction to the previous apartheid language-in-education policy, which used language assessment as a form of excluding students from certain schools. What is happening now, however, is that most black children are excluded from learning if the adopted language policy (teach in English from the 3rd grade) is followed strictly. Secondly, the term reasonableness permits the option of allowing the decision of medium of instruction to include only those languages i.e. English or Afrikaans that already have sufficient resources both material and human, which may then be used as a justification not to permit the use of African languages due to the lack of these resources. One could of course also say that when the teachers in the black schools do not master the LOI well, the human resources are not there. Thirdly, the issue of catchment areas suggests then that a provincial language policy could also be an option as opposed to local decisions, which may have serious implications for small language communities. Finally, the issue of periodic reviews was not reflected in the subsequent LiEP and given the lack of resources in other areas it is questionable that this would have been carried out had it been included. Moreover, as I note in chapter 7, the schools involved in this investigation have not even developed an institutional language policy, as there is a severe lack of capacity for this in the schools. In December 2002 I attended the AILA conference in Singapore. During my presentation Kathleen Heugh agreed with my argument that many ex-DET schools lack the capacity to develop such policies and she also commented that the schools in my investigation were not an isolated case as the lack of a language policy in these schools is widespread.

After publication, the “Policy Framework” was “widely published in order to broaden the debate on the reconstruction and development” of the education system (ANC, 1994:no page number).¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the document makes the assertion that a final version will be prepared after having received comments from the democratic alliance and after having taken full cognizance of the views of the general public. However, Desai, who was heavily involved in this process, declares that “although the draft document was widely disseminated it was only sent to Universities, NGOs, language organizations and schools for comment and that ordinary people were not commenting on it” (interview between Niedrig and Desai, 1996). Thus “only people with specific knowledge gave input” (interview between Niedrig and Desai, 1996). A question mark may also be put on which schools received and/or commented on the document as none of the teachers nor principals involved in this investigation received this document nor were they asked to give their input. Thus those voices included in the final document are limited to those political, academic, and other elite group members who had access to this discourse. Furthermore, the fact that the document was published in English only additionally restricted this discourse to those with sufficient access to this language.

Hence, it is important to keep in mind that few marginalized groups were involved in the “politics of negotiation” and in the government of national unity (GNU) resulting in the exclusion of various groups from the decision-making process. As this brief analysis has highlighted, those involved are generally policy-makers, academics and other informed individuals, while the voices of those oppressed and marginalized groups, for the most part, are absent. Furthermore, it is argued that “despite all the education policy research since 1990, there remains a profound silence over rural issues, and to a lesser extent, women, the unemployed and youth, precisely those strata of the population recognized to be the most historically disadvantaged” (Deacon & Parker, 1998:140-141). It is also possible to add to this list those urban poor living in underprivileged areas such as those found in this study. This investigation with reference to the context of the implementation of the LiEP in the townships and informal settlements in the Western Cape Province shows how these silences are then indicative of new or renewed exclusions. The sources for the national policies have been based on the input of elite groups such as scholarly elites and political elites, which have had control over the access to the discourses involved in the development of educational policy in general and language policy specifically for the new South Africa. The result is that the

¹⁵⁷ This quote was located in the section entitled “About this document” and was found on the inside cover.

dominant groups, which possess social power, have then ‘manufactured consent’ of the oppressed groups that has resulted in the status quo as the latter groups lack access to the discourses controlled by the former that are necessary to challenge this hegemony. Furthermore, Heugh (1995b:343) reached a similar conclusion in her review of language policy options for South Africa at the time, suggesting that the policies of the ANC and the NEPI are likely “to give way to the process of assimilation, which means the continuation of class divisions and little advance on effective democratisation”.

Fundamentally, the pull towards English by significant numbers of people [particularly political people] is symptomatic of the hegemony of English, the power of linguisticism, and the power of the economic sector...Should this not be addressed directly in ANC policy, the effect of a laissez-faire approach will ultimately be very much the same as maintaining the status quo, and the pull towards English and the Western paradigm will proceed unchecked. The language of the elite will continue to act as a gatekeeper which excludes the majority from access to economic and political empowerment despite any statement of policy to the contrary (Heugh, 1995b:343-344).

Furthermore, given that the ANC is the majority political party in the government since the 1994 elections, it is safe to assume that they will most likely exert the majority influence on national education policy. The White Paper on Education in September 1994, which drew upon the ANC’s “Policy Framework for Education and Training”, completely avoids the issue of language-in-education models, which Heugh (1995b:348 en13) suggests has been “a critical failure to grasp the importance of the relationship between medium of instruction and learning itself”. Furthermore, in my interview with Neville Alexander I asked: “Have economic and political conditions been created to promote multilingualism and national unity on equal levels?” This is his answer:

“If the economic policies and other political aspects of policy are not also reinforcing the language policy...and at the moment the economic policy is in fact increasing the divide, for example, between poor and rich and, therefore, to a large extent between black and white and also between language groups...especially in the private sector...English is more valued, much more than any other language. Afrikaans is still extremely valuable in the civil service, but in the private sector you still cannot get jobs very often if you do not know English...it is very seldom, except in some rural situations, that you will be refused a job because you cannot speak an African language. If you have other competencies like bureaucratic competencies, technocratic competence you will get employment and you will get an interpreter, whether it is a well-trained interpreter or not so then you can communicate. And of course this is a major issue and people notice. Even if language policy were carried out in the most democratic way it is not reinforced by political economic policies at all. I think government is going to have to face this...issue quite soon. Because what might

happen is that the racial fault-line in South African society will be replaced by a language fault-line where people are going to start looking at things in an ethnic way as they have done in other African countries” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02 emphasis original).

Additionally, given that most, if not all, the policy documents were written in English then only those with sufficient command of this language were able to interpret and to provide input on the proposed policies. When commenting on whether the NEPI report is still in discussion Desai sums up my argument very clearly.

“No, that is the problem with the literature in this country. The literate sector of the population is not very big. And the people who are most directly affected by language issues are often not literate or cannot read English. And then a report like that does not get widely disseminated. There is not a reading culture in a lot of ways and a lot of teachers have not read that let alone the ordinary public” (interview between Niedrig and Desai, 1996).

Here *more* access according to participant roles corresponds with *more* social power (van Dijk, 1996:86). As suggested by Desai those most affected by language issues are often those with the least access to the discourses concerning them.

6.3.2 *The LiEP*

The purpose of this section is to contextualize the debate in relation to the LiEP. I will begin by outlining the final stages in the development of the LiEP, followed by a detailed analysis. The initial stages were discussed in the previous section in relation to the discussion and developments of the ANC’s position as well as those of other political parties on issues relating to language. In this section the final stages leading to the actual 1997 LiEP will be focused upon. The analysis will be supplemented by a review of some of the current literature available on the issue of language in South Africa generally and the LiEP specifically (this will not be an exhaustive review of the literature as it is extensive; rather it will be a review of literature of special importance to my own analysis).

During the early 1990s formal negotiations took place between political parties and as a result a new Constitution was worked out among the different political parties with the ANC and the NP being the most influential in this process (Alexander & Heugh, 1999). According to Gerda de Klerk (2002) the African National Congress (ANC), which was banned between 1960-

1990, had the majority support among South Africans while the National Party (NP), the ruling party between 1948-1994, represented the Afrikaner Nationalists, which had white minority support. Alexander and Heugh (1999:12) argue that the two political groups did not equally prioritize the issue of language.

Afrikaner Nationalism was rooted in the 19th century European notion that language and 'national' (ethnic) identity are synonymous. The fear of losing political power was exacerbated by the fear that the identity of the Afrikaner people would be lost if the status of their language was diminished. Thus the official status of Afrikaans could not, for the National Party and its supporters, be compromised. In contrast, the ANC did not attach a similar importance to language issues. Much greater significance was attached to removing or diluting a wide range of symbols of apartheid, of which language policy was only one. The official policy of the ANC was that all languages¹⁵⁸ would be regarded as equal, but that none should be accorded official status. The unofficial conviction, however, was that English, for pragmatic reasons, would function as the official language of government. This view of English has its origins in the early history of the ANC when English had been regarded as a language of liberation and a language through which opposition to the Afrikaans-speaking government would be mediated. Additionally, many senior members of the ANC had been exiled in English-speaking countries for many years prior to 1990 and had come to believe that English functioned as the *lingua franca* in the country.

Through the interaction between the NP and the ANC then it is possible to see the competing agendas that were at work. This argument also supports my own analysis presented in the previous section that the ANC's ideology was that English should serve as the *lingua franca* and that this was in part influenced by their own internal language policy and the beliefs of many of the senior members as a result of their experiences in English-speaking countries during their exile. In an interview I conducted with Neville Alexander he also draws attention to the role played by the Afrikaners concerning the language issue with reference to the Constitution.

“We have a Constitution that today in its essence promotes multilingualism and equality of language rights and so on...mainly because of the position which the Afrikaner political leadership took up during the negotiation settlement...In getting multilingualism into the Constitution and the equality of languages into the Constitution had to do with the fact that Afrikaners wanted Afrikaans to maintain its equality with English. And the black middle-class leadership could not accede to

¹⁵⁸ This does not necessarily mean that all languages found within South Africa were seen as equal. Additionally, there are more than eleven languages found within the borders of South Africa and all these are indigenous languages. The nine African languages [Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga] that were recognized in the Constitution had previously served as “official languages” in the Bantustans set up by the apartheid government (cf chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion concerning the languages in South Africa).

Afrikaans if it did not also accede to the African languages, that is the fundamental point. But that does not mean that they were convinced that it was possible” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02).

The implicit message here is that the identity of the Afrikaner people embodied in their language ultimately became a powerful symbol of a minority group willing to demand their language rights simultaneously demanded the language rights for all language groups as a way of combating the hegemony of English.

Norval (1998) makes a similar observation in her analysis of the discourse of the Freedom Front (FF). Her argument suggests that the Afrikaner claim for self-determination is in fact a demand for the recognition of the Afrikaner group as one minority group amongst many others. Norval furthermore, argues that the “disempowerment of the Afrikaner led them from a position of being a Government in control of what they considered to be their own land, to a position of a minority subjected to a majority which is clearly willing to enforce its majority position, without any reference to a legitimate form of group rights that would ease the apprehension of the minority group” (Norval, 1998:98). In essence the Afrikaans lobby “shifted from the segregationist position to a language as a right, in order to protect its inevitable minority situation in the future and a tentative commitment to language as a resource” (Alexander & Heugh, 1999:12). This rights position is also reflected in Norval’s (1998) discussion of the FF’s discourse concerning cultural recognition and where the FF argues that the ‘Afrikaner’s’ position in the new South Africa – as a cultural minority – requires special forms of protection. As a result the plea by the Afrikaners for protection of minority groups in turn advocated that all groups should be protected. The result was that the NP promoted equal status for all¹⁵⁹ of South Africa’s languages seeing *language as a right* and *multilingualism as a resource* in their effort to maintain the status of Afrikaans.

As the final stages of multi-party constitutional negotiations were reached in December 1993 last-minute compromises were made to protect language rights. In the resulting interim 1993 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the subsequent 1996 Constitution, in Section 6(1), eleven languages are recognized to be official languages. With the Constitution serving

¹⁵⁹ The term “all” used here does not suggest that all languages found in South Africa were to be included as ultimately the Constitution gave official status to only eleven languages (cf 3.1 for languages not included).

as a foundation it has been argued that various language policies, bodies, and processes¹⁶⁰ were set in motion, which involved the interaction among three main interest groups (Gerda de Klerk, 2002). These groups according to Gerda de Klerk were the ANC, the NP (the Afrikaner Nationalists) and a diverse combination of sociolinguists, academics, and political activists who “formed a vanguard in relation to language issues” but who did not have extensive support or power. A number of nongovernmental organizations were also involved in this work such as NLP (National Language Project), USWE (Use Speak and Write English), ELTIC (English Language and Teaching Information Center) and PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa). Thus the NGO sector played a significant role in much of the language policy developments with PRAESA being one of the main actors. ELTIC (1997) and PRAESA have provided in-service teacher education courses aimed at helping teachers to develop strategies to handle multilingual classrooms effectively. PRAESA has also focused on activities aimed at creating an awareness of the diverse range of languages South Africa, and which attempt to recruit these languages into the curriculum. The READ Organization works in historically black schools and provides a teacher development and resource provision program with a focus on language and literacy skills. However, this interest in language research in South Africa was not a new phenomenon and was already evident more than 30 years ago (cf Prinsloo, 1978 for a number of examples of larger research projects and programs involving South African languages in progress in the 1970s). Despite the interest by the NGO sector, and the few NGOs discussed there is a lack of coordination and overview by the Department of Education. This is certainly an area that needs further work.

Thus I contend that without the prominent role played by Afrikaner Nationalists the language clauses in the constitution might not have been included. Furthermore, my interview with Neville Alexander suggests a similar conclusion as argued by Gerda de Klerk (2002:40) that “both left-wing language strategists and the Afrikaner Nationalists understood the link between language and power and the consequences of a laissez-faire approach to English, whereas the ANC leadership did not consider, or presumed innocuous, outcomes from such a laissez-faire approach”. In the interview with Neville Alexander he points this out as follows:

¹⁶⁰ For this investigation I will limit my discussion mainly to the LiEP. However, there are other interesting developments concerning language issues at the national level, which space limitations do not permit me to elaborate upon. For an interesting discussion of these see Taylor (2002) where she describes the work of LANGTAG and PANSALB in greater detail than I am able to consider here.

“There are very few political people in the ANC that have taken the language question seriously and that even understand the language question...people do not understand the relationship between language and the economy, language and identity. The people who do have an inkling are usually conservative and even reactionary people amongst Afrikaans-speaking whites and Zulu-speaking royal families who have some sense of the power of language. The racial issue has been such a major fault line in South African society that the language question has always been to the side. It is only the radical left-wing people and right-wing elements who have understood it” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02).

Thus Alexander asserts that the language question has not been seriously considered and that the relationship between language and the economy, and language and identity have not been understood within the ANC leadership. Furthermore the racial issue in South Africa has been such a major point of conflict in South Africa that it has overshadowed the language issue altogether.

In the latter part of 1995, the Department of Education commissioned a working group made up of members from the NGO sector in order to draft a working document for a new language in education policy. According to Neville Alexander the NGO ELTIC was the main group involved in this commission and their initial draft of the LiEP was based on the work of the NGO NLP (personal communication, August 2003). Within a month of the report the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology commissioned a Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) to assist him in creating a national language plan. The LANGTAG included seven subcommittees, one of which addressed language in education. A final draft of the Language Policy and Language Plan for South Africa was presented to the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in November 2000. In its final report the LANGTAG stated that language can and should be planned as an integral part of social policy, especially in multilingual societies. Also it rejected the orientation of language as a problem in favor of an orientation of language as a fundamental human and a vital national resource (DACST, 1996). Additionally, space limitations do not permit a detailed discussion of the LANGTAG and subsequent developments (for more details cf Taylor, 2002 and Alexander and Heugh, 1999). In addition a Language Bill was presented to Parliament in 2000. In May 2002 the then Minister of DACST, Dr. Ben Ngubane, was in Norway and met with a group of researchers from various universities and institutions in Norway. I was present during this meeting and asked the Minister about the pending Language Bill and Language Policy. He assured me that he was behind the Bill and that his department had made every effort to see the Bill passed in

Parliament, but that “the Minister and the Department of Education was the stumbling block in getting the Bill through Parliament” as it would have implications for the Department of Education (interview: Ngubane, 28/05/02). This Bill is still pending and those who have worked closely in developing it state that they “do not know when it will be passed” (interview: Ngubane, 28/05/02; interview: Desai, 14/03/02). Even though the national language policy was launched in March 2003, the pending Bill provides the legislative backing for the policy. However, Zubeida Desai was present at the launch of the policy and noted that even at the launch of the policy there were still calls for consultation and comments on the policy. Her response was “I want to see multilingualism in *practice* in my lifetime” (personal communication, March 2002 emphasis original).

In keeping with usual procedure the LiEP draft document (based on the work by ELTIC and the NLP) was then circulated for comment among a select group of informed individuals. Alexander and Heugh (1999) also point out that the earlier language in education proposals from PRAESA influenced this policy and Alexander comments that the LANGTAG had some influence as well (personal communication, August 2003). Additionally, Desai noted the role played by PRAESA in the development of the LiEP:

“In coming up with the document, which promotes very strongly additive bilingualism I think PRAESA played quite a prominent role in terms of that particular concept...There were consultative meetings in different parts of the country to discuss earlier versions of the document...I read some of those responses and they are included in a long document called “the orange book”...However, I personally felt that the model of additive bilingualism that was promoted in the LiEP, although there is mention of other kinds of approaches, the model that was presented was based on a “dual medium approach”. Now for a dual medium approach¹⁶¹ to work you either must have *two teachers* who speak each of the two languages or *one* teacher who is *fairly bilingual* in both languages. It also helps if those two languages have the same kind of status. Now in South Africa we *do not have* a lot of that in place” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02 emphasis original).

Thus Desai acknowledges PRAESA’s influence with reference to specific aspects of the policy, in particular the dual-medium approach that PRAESA is very committed to. However, Desai is also critical that the department gave preference to this approach in particular. I must also agree with Desai’s assessment that for the dual medium approach to work the requirements necessary are not available in most schools in South Africa and thus for one

¹⁶¹ PRAESA has carried out a number of research studies involving the dual medium approach (many of the results are published in PRAESA’s Occasional Papers series, which are available from PRAESA).

particular approach to be promoted at the expense of other alternatives suggests short-sightedness on the part of the Department of Education. It is important, however, to note that PRAESA is now exploring other options and the dual-medium approach is being looked at where it is applicable (personal communication with Peter Plüddemann from PRAESA, April 2003).

My investigation shows then that the following organizations were either directly involved or influenced the LiEP policy in some way: ELTIC, the NLP, LANGTAG, and PRAESA with individuals such as Neville Alexander, who was not only the chair of LANGTAG but also the director of PRAESA and involved in the NLP, and Paul Musker,¹⁶² the coordinator and convenor of the Department of Education Committee appointed to develop the LiEP. Furthermore, Alexander also confirms Desai's statement that he was very involved and thus influential in the final touches in the negotiations of the LiEP (personal communication, August 2003). The policy drafting group in the Department of Education headed by Paul Musker from ELTIC and the Language in Education subcommittee of LANGTAG chaired by Neville Alexander were also operational at the same time which allowed them the opportunity to meet and discuss their work (Alexander, personal communication, August 2003). Thus Alexander commented that through these arrangements he, for the most part, drafted the Language in Education Policy himself (personal communication, August 2003).

A final version of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) was then developed as a result of the draft document along with discussions and consultations among the informed individuals and NGOs as noted above. The draft document was the result of intertextually related discourses from the ANC through their various discussion documents (cf ANC, 1992a, 1992b, 1994; NEPI, 1992) and the NP discourse with the Afrikaners playing a significant role. Consequently in July 1997 the Minister of Education announced that the LiEP was then based on the principal of additive bilingualism, which was heavily influenced by the work of NGOs previously mentioned and individuals such as Alexander and Musker. Principally the policy promotes the use of the home language in addition to a second language and for the majority of students this means English. The specific aspects of the LiEP that are of interest in this investigation will now be discussed.

¹⁶² Neville Alexander informed me of Paul Musker's involvement (personal communication, August 2003).

The main policy objectives of the LiEP are to promote additive and functional multilingualism, and sociolinguistic and cultural integration. Accordingly in the preamble of the LiEP the following points are of relevance (DoE, 1997a:1):

- (3) The new language in education policy is conceived as an integral and necessary aspect of the new government's strategy of building a non-racial nation in South Africa. It is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language, and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one's own would be encouraged.
- (5) ...drawing on comparative international experience demonstrating that, under appropriate conditions, most learners benefit cognitively and emotionally from the type of structured bilingual education found in dual-medium (also known as two-way immersion) programmes. Whichever route is followed, the underlying principle is to maintain language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence, the Department's positions that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our language-in-education policy.
- (6) The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. This right has, however, to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism.

The ultimate intended outcome of this policy is that two or more languages will be perceived and used as languages of learning for all learners in the country (DoE, 1997a:13; Luckett, 1995:75; Alexander, 2000:17). First of all, in point (3) it is stated that the LiEP is meant to facilitate communication between groups. However, this could suggest that this is something that is wished for but not certain. Additionally, it is not specified how this will be achieved, which could mean that speakers of African languages will be required to learn English or Afrikaans (which is currently the general rule), but that speakers of English or Afrikaans will not be required to learn African languages. The result is most likely bilingualism for speakers of African languages, but not others (although Afrikaans language speakers generally have learned English as a second language while English language speakers have not necessarily learned Afrikaans to the same degree). This suggests that a *diglossic* situation may actually be maintained with English (and to some degree Afrikaans) remaining as a H (high) variety language(s), used more in public domains with the African languages remaining a L (low) variety, to be used in informal settings and for initial literacy only (Ferguson, 1972). Furthermore, this brings to mind the issue of equity as suggested by Kress (1996) where equity should be treated as something that works *reciprocally*, in *all* directions (cf 5.5.1 for this discussion). Thus if communication is to be facilitated between groups, then English- or Afrikaans-speaking groups should also be required to learn an African language. Hence at the

educational/individual level high levels of bilingualism or multilingualism “are a necessary educational goal for all linguistic minority children and a desirable goal for *all* children” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:244 emphasis added) whether a minority or majority. Recent research into the ideology behind the language policy is critical of the policy, suggesting that multilingualism took precedence over the facilitation of learning (Mathiesen, 2003). Others have echoed this criticism stating that “at times it is not clear whether this aim [the facilitation of learning], or the *promotion of multilingualism*, is pre-eminent in the documents” (Desai & van der Merwe, 1998:252 emphasis original).

Secondly, point (5) has been previously discussed above, where the idea of supporting one approach over and above others appears to be problematic. First of all the reference to dual-medium approach is also stated as two-way immersion, which according to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) are not necessarily the same types of program (cf 4.5.1 about misunderstanding the program types). Thus immersion programs in general refer to linguistic majority children with a high status language instructed through a foreign (minority) language where the teacher is bilingual (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:614). This resembles the dual-medium programs for English- and Afrikaans-speaking children in South Africa established in the early 1900s (Malherbe, 1977; also cf 6.2). On the other hand, two-way bilingual (dual language) programs (also known as ‘dual immersion’) are models where approximately 50% are majority students and 50% are minority students (with the same mother tongue) who voluntarily choose to be instructed by a ‘completely’ bilingual teacher (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:618). Initially instruction is given in the minority language (90%-10% model) or through the medium of both languages (50%-50% model), where the dominant language is then taught as a subject. This in itself is problematic given that many of the township and rural schools are generally homogenous and, therefore, do not provide learners the benefit of interaction with their peers who are native or near-native speakers of English (the medium of instruction from Grade 4 onwards). Essentially for African pupils, the classroom is the only setting in which they receive most, if not all, of their exposure to English and this is often provided by teachers who themselves are non-native or less competent speakers of the language (cf chapter 7 for this discussion). This is also an important factor in the distinction between foreign language learning (FLL) and second language acquisition (SLA) (cf 4.6.2 and 4.6.3) as peers play an important role in SLA and not in FLL. It is only some of the ex-Model C schools and former colored only schools that have in recent years become more heterogeneous to any degree, and thus to propose such a model as a viable alternative nationally is complicated given the many

constraints such as available ‘competent’ bilingual teachers, economic resources, and the current student composition in the schools, to name a few. Hence, I draw attention to the limitations of the viability of this model.

Finally point (6) suggests that the individual (students or in the case of minor children parents) has the right to choose the language of learning and teaching. This is seen as a reaction to the top-down centralized decision-making process of the apartheid government and as such is intertextually related to apartheid discourses. The ability of individuals to exercise this right is, however, dependent upon the individual having access to information concerning such decisions. As previously argued ‘ordinary’ individuals, in general, do not have access to political, academic or other discourses to allow them to make informed decisions. A similar point is also taken up by Webb (1999) who is critical of the policy concerning the ability of school governing bodies in making decisions with reference to the development of a language policy¹⁶³ for schools. Furthermore, the policy stipulates that school governing bodies (SGBs) are responsible for developing a language policy for the schools and in doing so they “must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism” (DoE, 1997a:3). SGBs include not only principals and teachers of the schools, but also parents. The ability of parents from different educational backgrounds results in different abilities to develop the sophisticated policies as stipulated in the LiEP. Certainly those parents who have been historically oppressed are not going to be empowered to any degree if they are not given the capacity to develop such policies. Furthermore, Webb (1999:361) comments, “whilst the philosophy of individual choice and the devolution of decision-making accords nicely, it is essential that decision-makers be enabled to make informed choices”. The result is that there is choice only if one has the necessary information. Walker and Archung (2003) suggest that historically the involvement of black South African communities in the decision-making process of schools was problematic. Thus “schools were not seen as inviting the involvement of parents, and parents were not described as having any influence on the direction of the school” (Walker & Archung, 2003:33). This resulted in students and parents often believing that schools should be responsible for decisions concerning, for example, medium of instruction (cf also 7.6 about the problems concerning such decisions).

¹⁶³ The policy also stipulates that school governing bodies are responsible for developing a language policy for the schools and in doing so they “must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism” (DoE, 1997a:3).

Desai also argues that “while it is ideal to leave the choice to the individual [in the case of minor children parents/guardians would be responsible for this choice] the policy is not being implemented in the spirit that it was intended” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02) and as a result the status quo is maintained. Desai argues that the “choice factor” is one of the most “implicit tensions that run through the document” (Desai, 2001:330). Thus “despite that fact that the Soweto uprising of 1976 serves as a grim reminder that no state can afford to impose a language policy on learners, there is an argument for saying that the new policy document errs on the side of allowing too much choice”. As such it is argued that:

...unless such individual choice is accompanied by a public awareness campaign around language and learning issues, and a massive injection of resources, both material and human, the prejudices of the past are likely to militate against individual learners choosing African languages as languages of learning (Desai, 2001:330-331).

The statement by Desai serves to highlight the irony that there can be *too much choice* which may furthermore be described as a *laissez-faire* approach to the language issue.

Concerning the languages of learning and teaching the LiEP makes four primary assertions:

1. It accepts the principle of additive bilingualism
2. It accepts any official language as a possible language of learning and teaching at all levels of study
3. It stipulates that learners (in practice: parents and school authorities) select their language of learning and teaching on entering a school, accepting that their choice may differ from the language policy of the school concerned, and
4. It describes the bases upon which disputes about the language of learning and teaching must be handled (the principles of rights, equity, redress and practicability), as well as the way in which such disputes must be resolved (consultation with the Member of the Executive Council for Education for the province, the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) and an appeal for arbitration) (DoE, 1997a; Webb, 1999:360).

Apart from stipulating that “the language(s) of learning and teaching in a public school must be (an) official language(s)” (DoE, 1997a:section 4.4) the document does not specify that the language(s) of learning and teaching (LOLT) should be a home language (mother tongue) and as such undermines the “underlying principle...to maintain home language(s)” as medium of instruction (DoE, 1997 section 4.4 point 5). What is also interesting is that nowhere in the document is it stipulated that a transition from i.e. the mother tongue to English as the language of learning and teaching must take place at all. It is, however, assumed by many (teachers, principals, parents and students) that this transition must take place. Previously this

switch occurred in Grade 5 and now it occurs even earlier in Grade 4. The result is that the status quo is maintained and the de facto 1979 language policy remains intact. Alexander confirmed this in an interview with him:

“There have been different periods with different theories about transition and so on. What we have now is really an inheritance from the late apartheid period, not the early or middle apartheid period but the late apartheid period. After 1976, in fact you can say after 1979 really, when pressure from the mass of particularly African people led to this decision. It was never really a formal decision. It became more of a practice really. And there is no decision in any government structure, as far as I am aware, which says that people must use English in grade 4, *not at all*. But it has become a general practice...in reality, as you also know, people use in the Western Cape they use Xhosa for most of the talk time and that is part of the problem. Never mind, for the moment, the fact that the teachers themselves in primary schools generally are not proficient enough in English. Quite apart from that fact, the reality is that they use mainly Xhosa but the children will write their subjects in English and of course that is where the problem starts. So in a sense the policy position even though it is clear from the documents, from the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of 1997, leaves the matter fairly open. It leaves a range of possibilities that teachers and school governing bodies can decide upon” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02 emphasis original).

What Alexander points out in his statement is that there is no government demand for Grade 4 transition to English, but as I have already argued the policy may be described as a *laissez-faire* approach to the language issue similar to that which prevailed in the pre- 1910 period (cf summary in 6.2). In 1979 the switch from mother tongue to English became law “empowering the use of English from Std 3” (Grade 5) (Hartshorne, 1992:204). However, what Alexander is referring to here is not the 1979 law, but the current practice, which is no longer subject to the pre-1994 laws. Therefore, the bottom line is that there is no official stipulation that this transition must occur at any point in the educational system. Furthermore, Alexander points to the paradoxical situation where the teachers in many of the township classrooms teach in Xhosa, but the tests are in English. Ultimately the problem is that despite the fact that much of the teaching is done in the mother tongue (or often the mother tongue with some English mixed in) the examinations (and classroom tests) are in English only (in schools where the transition is to Afrikaans the language of testing is Afrikaans). Therefore, regardless of the fact that there is no governmental stipulation that the transition must take place the reality is that only English or Afrikaans are recognized in national (and classroom) testing. This sends a powerful message not only to schools, but also to parents and students about the language issue. By leaving the matter open individuals and schools are seemingly allowed the option to choose. Leaving the issue too vague, however, allows the Department of Education along

with book publishers and others the opportunity to interpret the policy, as they deem appropriate. The assumption is that although the transition to English is not explicit, it is implied and, therefore, material available in African languages after the Grade 4 level is limited (cf chapter 7 for a discussion concerning materials). Furthermore, Webb (1999) is skeptical concerning cases where individuals are requesting a language, no school may be offering the desired language. The issue of reasonable practicability will be taken into consideration, which opens up the possibility for economics to play a determining role. In addition, this may perpetuate the hegemony of certain languages, which already have a sufficient number of resources available (both human and material).

Another point that needs to be highlighted is the policy concerning languages as subjects where it is declared, “all languages shall receive equitable time and resource allocation” (DoE, 1997a:2). The issue of equitable time is disputed in light of the findings of this investigation (cf 7.2.4 on allocation of time for the mother tongue and 7.2.6). Furthermore, the allocation of equitable resources concerning African languages according to Weber (2002)¹⁶⁴ is erroneous given that it would require huge amounts of money to be spent on materials development in these languages to make up for past disparities. The reality is that there appears to be very little money being spent on these languages, with **lack of materials** being cited as one of the **major obstacles** in implementing the multilingual policy (cf 7.2.6). During this study I made several attempts to find out how and if the NGO community and the government are making an effort to promote and develop the African languages as prescribed in the Constitution and the LiEP. What I was able to find out was that aside from pockets containing small scale projects such as those supported by PRAESA (one of the most active NGOs focusing on the language issue) and the LOITASA project (supported by the Norwegian government) very little is being done to promote or develop the African languages, by either the NGO community or government. The few projects that were initiated or promoted by the government were mainly concerned with promoting English only. For example, DANIDA (the Danish overseas development agency) is supporting, in partnership with the Department of Education, a three year project aimed at building the capacity of further education and training teachers to deliver outcomes-based education. The National Access Consortium (NAC) was set up in the Western Cape to develop OBE curriculum

¹⁶⁴ Weber (2002) provides an interesting discussion on the tension between equity and equality. It is suggested, “while equity is seen as addressing unjust outcomes, equality is defined in relation to inequality” (Weber, 2002:263).

materials for use in Grade 10. I had the opportunity to meet with both the director of the NAC and those responsible for the development of the materials. During my discussion with those responsible for developing the language, literacy and communication materials I asked if the materials were being developed in the three languages prominent in the Western Cape (Afrikaans, English and Xhosa). I was told that the materials were being developed in English only and that there were some thoughts to maybe later developing them in Afrikaans, but that there were no plans whatsoever to develop them in Xhosa. Apparently those working at the NAC did not see the need or the importance of developing the materials in Xhosa. This example, serves to show how donors are able to have some influence as DANIDA seems to be supporting a project focused on English only and not any of the other official languages of the country. Additionally, during the writing up phase (of this dissertation) I made over 25 telephone calls to NGOs and Embassies as well as to several people within the Department of Education in my attempt to gain some overview as to what is being done in relation to the African languages. The result is that no one appears to have a detailed overview of what is being done in relation to these languages and even in my inquiry to PANSALB, the language board responsible for language related issues, I was unable to obtain any detailed information. Moreover, my informant at PANSALB was not very optimistic on the future of the African languages considering the possibility of obtaining funding for their development and use stating that “there is a lack of commitment and interest in these languages by both NGOs and the government” (telephone communication with PANSALB representative, August 2003).

Desai (2001:330) contends that the policy may actually counter the aims of facilitating learning and promoting “communication between South Africans through the development of additive multilingualism” given that “except for Grades 10-12, only one language (as opposed to prior 1994) is now compulsory for promotion purposes”. The result is that in the formal sense learners could be less multilingual than in the past with the assumption being that language development would be facilitated through content subject teaching and as such learners would not be required to “demonstrate their proficiency through language as a subject” (Desai, 2001:330). However, it is argued that “given the very poor learning conditions existing at most schools and the virtual non-existence of a languages across the curriculum approach, the chances of such language development happening are very slim indeed” (Desai & Taylor, 1997:174 cited in Desai, 2001:330).

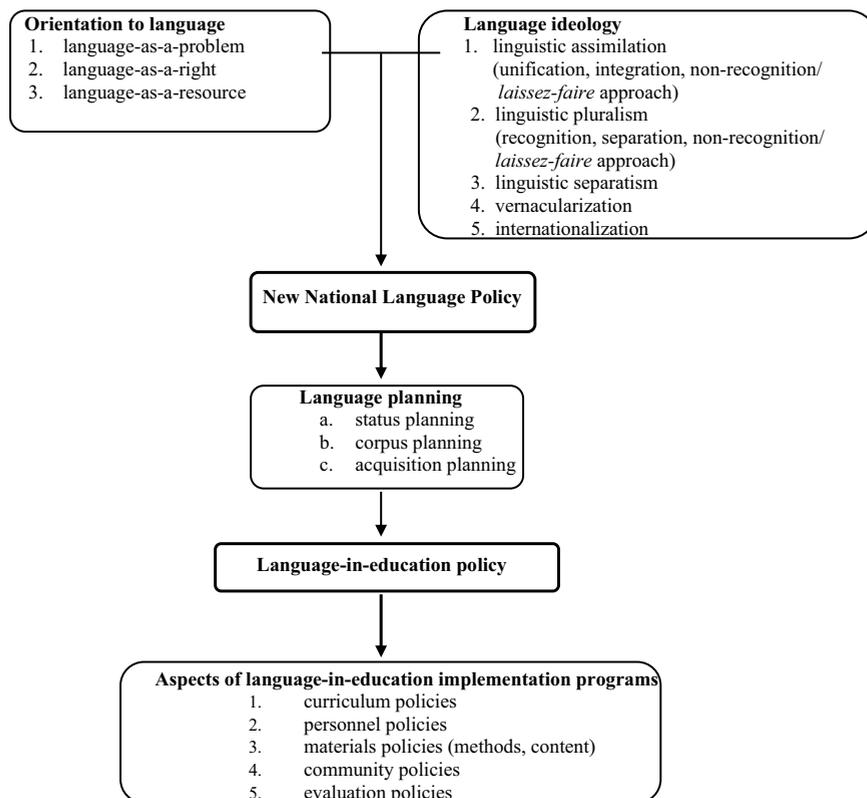
6.4 Conclusion

Before concluding this chapter I would like to draw attention to some final issues concerning language policy and language planning.¹⁶⁵ In much of the literature on language planning and language policy the two topics are treated as one. Cooper (1989:29) maintains that “there is no single, universally accepted definition of language planning” and that “there is even disagreement as to what term should be used to denote the activity”. Furthermore, he asserts that the term *language policy* has even served as a synonym for *language planning*, but that it generally indicates the goals of language planning. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) suggests that in understanding what happens to languages in education we need to begin with the macro-level framework. As such the state’s language policy is either overt or covert and includes three levels, namely status, corpus, and acquisition¹⁶⁶ planning (Cooper, 1989). The education sector takes the most active role in contributing to acquisition planning stipulating which languages may be learned as mother tongues, second languages, and foreign languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In understanding the language policy I have discussed in this chapter the framework by Taylor (2002:317) is seen as useful providing an overview of the issues that have been presented. The framework (cf figure 6.1) incorporates the three orientations to language based on the work by Ruiz (1988), which was presented in chapter 4. These orientations may be applied and the policy adopted by decision-makers will depend on their orientation to language issues and the linguistic ideology they adopt as suggested in the CDA analysis presented in this chapter. Furthermore, Taylor suggests that the planning and implementation in the educational sector will be shaped by the national language policy. However, I argue that this is problematic for South Africa given that the LiEP has been developed before the National Policy.

¹⁶⁵ Space constraints do not permit a detailed discussion of language planning in this dissertation (for a detailed discussion of this cf Cooper, 1989 or Taylor, 2002 which deals specifically with language planning in South Africa). I also realize that language planning is an important aspect and that it goes hand in hand with language policy, but again I have made the decision to limit my focus to the policy aspect. I will, however, draw on the work by Taylor (2002) in order that some of this discussion is presented.

¹⁶⁶ Kloss (1969) differentiates between corpus planning and status planning and Cooper (1989) contributes to this model by adding acquisition planning as a third aspect of language planning. Kloss (1969) maintains that status planning is concerned with artificially interfering with existing status relations with languages in contact. In addition, Cooper (1989) asserts that the goal of status planning is to allocate distinct functions to different languages and in multilingual contexts there are 12 functions in total (for these 12 functions cf Cooper, 1989). Corpus planning concerns the establishment of a written form of a language with function being more important than form and includes four categories, namely *graphization*, *standardization* involving also *codification*, *modernization* and *renovation* (Cooper, 1989). Finally acquisition planning refers to “organized efforts to promote the learning of a language” (Cooper, 1989:157). Moreover, Cooper (1989:120) differentiates between status and acquisition planning where “status planning is an effort to regulate the demand for a given verbal resources whereas acquisition planning is an effort to regulate the distribution of those resources”.

Figure 6.1: The Process of Devising a New National Language Policy as it Affects Language-in-Education Implementation Programs



(Source Taylor, 2002:318)

Thus in analyzing the policy using the three orientations to language based on the work by Ruiz (1988) it may be argued that first of all the orientation to language demonstrated in the document displays some confusion. In the preamble the document suggests that the Department of Education's view on language may be described as *language-as-a-resource* (Ruiz, 1988) given that additive multilingualism, equality of languages along with the promotion of African languages are all addressed (DoE, 1997a:1). In spite of this, the ambiguity along with the indecisiveness in the actual policy statements suggest that the Department's orientation to language is from the perspective of *language-as-a-problem* or at

best *language-as-a-right* (Ruiz, 1988), which Alexander and Heugh (1999) suggest as a passive right as opposed to positive rights proposed by Trew and Desai (1992).

In assessing the linguistic ideology adopted it is essential to look at both the political rhetoric and the implementation, which is precisely what this investigation has attempted to do through the use of the framework suggested by van Dijk (1996). The implementation of the policy is described in detail in chapter 7 while the actual policy and its development have been discussed in this chapter. Specifically this investigation asked: What is the ideology behind the educational language policy in South Africa? From a policy level the rhetoric suggests an approach informed by linguistic pluralism where the recognition of the rights of minority (in this case the majority) languages, cultures, and education are recognized explicitly in the national constitution (Watson, 1979; cf figure 6.1 for an overview of different language ideologies). Furthermore, an additional approach applies to linguistic pluralism where there is non-recognition or a *laissez-faire* approach, as suggested earlier, in which governments choose to ignore or devolve linguistic issues (in this case language policy development at the school level is devolved to the school governing bodies), which is equal to maintaining the *status quo*.

Other policy questions asked were: Why and how did the language in education policy develop the way it did (the social relationships of power)? What have been (and are) the forces behind the formulation of the language policy for education in South Africa? What have been the roles of the various donor agencies and of the African elites? My analysis has highlighted that the development of the various draft proposals leading up to and including the LiEP demonstrates an acute absence of the voices of the ‘ordinary’ people. This is in line with what Ellsworth and Stahnke (1976) have pointed out that three different groups are connected to policy decisions, namely *formal elites*, *influentials* and *authorities*. Despite what might have been seen as a result of a consultative process, the reality is that the voices involved in the LiEP were mainly political elites, academics, sociolinguists and NGOs with few of the previously oppressed groups, mainly consisting of speakers of African languages and in particular the voices of ordinary people, involved in the “politics of negotiation”. In the new government of national unity, as well as that of the apartheid regime, there has been an exclusion of various groups from the decision-making process. In other words, regardless of the rhetoric suggesting that there was continual consultation with stakeholders or “language planning from below” (Alexander, 1989, 1992), this study indicates that only a select few

have had access to these discourses and thus the ruling class controls the means of production and the (re)production of ideas. As a result they are “able to make their ideologies more or less accepted by the ruled as undisputed knowledge of the ‘natural’ way things are” (van Dijk, 1998:2). Van Dijk (1993:26) describes the elites as “those who have power and hence more control over the actions of more people in more situations”. The elites will normally contribute to the reproduction of dominance. Elites have a special responsibility in this (re)production. They have the most resources to actively propagate it or to oppose it. Furthermore, as this analysis has pointed out, the ANC has never taken the African languages seriously and multilingualism was only included as a compromise resulting from intense pressure by the Afrikaner Nationalists.

Additionally, the decentralization of power is seen as promoting inequalities given that school governance is thrust upon parents, many of whom are from poor and oppressed communities which do not have the same capacity as those from predominantly white middle-class communities. The South African Schools Act of 1996 decentralized power from the central government to schools by way of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) (DoE, 1997a). As previously noted one of the responsibilities of the SGBs is to develop a language policy for their school in addition to stating how the school will promote multilingualism. Here the issue of capacity refers to the ability of parents to develop sophisticated policies, such as a language policy, which is dependent on parents’ ability to have access to the information and the resources (for example, reading and writing ability) necessary to develop such policies. The situation is that many of the parents in the townships have not had the same educational opportunity as many of the parents in, for example, the ex-Model C schools, the result is that many of the parents in the townships “have difficulty in reading and writing” (interview: P2, 01/03/02) combined with little or no information regarding the language issue results in their inability to develop sophisticated and detailed policies. What these parents (members of the school governing bodies) need is assistance from the Department of Education to provide them with the tools (information and resources) necessary to develop the required policies. In addition it is not only the semi-privatized local schools which highlight the inequalities within the system, user fees are another way for government schools in certain areas to control access. In fact, it may be argued that this is then economic apartheid as opposed to ideological apartheid.

Desai relates the high-level policy decisions vis-à-vis educational practice at the local level, implying that the symbolic gesture by the government in recognizing multilingualism simply remains symbolic (interview: Desai, 14/03/02) when the realities of the classroom do not reflect their stated intention and the hegemony of English remains (cf chapter 7 for details).

Moreover, Desai also recognizes the status of English stating that:

“At the moment there is a lot of lip service being paid to ‘multilingualism’. And what it means in practice is something totally different. In fact the hegemony of English remains virtually intact, but now people would greet their students in Xhosa, or they use a little bit of Xhosa here, and a little bit of Xhosa there, and then somehow it is ‘multilingual’. But for me the ultimate thing is: Can the students write their exams in Xhosa? If they can’t, then don’t tell me it is a multilingual classroom” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02).

Deacon and Parker (1998) argue that regardless of the pace of educational change the urban middle and working classes more or less have the power to ensure their educational development. However, as new oppositions begin to replace that of race the legacies of apartheid will continue in that the rural, the migrant and the destitute, those who benefited the least from Bantu education, will continue to find themselves marginalized in relation to self-governance and development planning. The urban poor and oppressed urban communities should be added to this list.

The role the discourse (the LiEP) has played in the (re)production and challenge of dominance can be seen in the government’s political will to intervene in the language situation with regard to the 11 official language policy, which in the words of Alexander (1995:38) has remained “a dead letter”.

Chapter 7: Presentation of classroom data and discussion

7.1 Introduction

The 'policy gap', [is] understood as the mismatch between policy intention and policy practice and outcome
(Sayed, 2002:29)

While chapter 6 aimed to analyze the policy intention, this chapter presents the findings of the ethnographic investigation in the three different schools (SC1, SC2 and SC3). In the first chapter I discussed that the project explores two related issues, namely policy and practice, or as Sayed (2002) mentions in the quote above, the 'policy gap', that is the gap between the policy intention and the policy practice or outcome. In this chapter I now turn my attention to the practice, that is, the implementation of the LiEP at the classroom level. Moreover, in chapter 1 I highlighted a number of questions that the project attempts to answer, which are listed under the heading of *classroom realities*. These questions are as follows:

- How well do pupils adjust to having a foreign language as a medium of instruction?
- How do teachers and their students deal with the transition from mother tongue to a foreign medium of instruction?
- Why is the transition taking place?
- How do teachers cope with teaching in a language they do not use outside of the classroom?
- What language do teachers want to teach in and pupils want to be taught in and why?
- What language do parents want their children to be taught in and why?

These questions will be discussed in the light of the information gathered in this investigation. Additionally, the last two questions are equally related to the policy aspect, analyzed in the previous chapter, as well as to the practice. However, I have chosen to deal with these questions here with connections being made to the policy as they relate. During the analysis of the research data, as described in chapter 5, a number of issues emerged and through the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) these issues were grouped into a number of categories. These categories and how they relate to the questions presented above will be discussed in the sections that follow. The chapter is organized into six main sections:

Adjusting to a foreign language as medium of instruction, Dealing with the language transition – focusing on the students, How teachers cope in teaching through a foreign language, Tests and testing, Which language or languages and for what purposes?, and finally What do schools and teachers say about the policy.

Before proceeding I would like to give a brief introduction to the communities where the schools, that participated in this study, are located (a partial description is found in 5.3.3.1) and a short presentation of the participants.

7.1.1 Contextualizing the communities and the participants

In this section I briefly present a description of the eight teachers that participated in the study, using fictitious names so as to uphold anonymity (exact descriptions are not given as many have provided me with views that might have consequences for their positions, therefore, the descriptions are more general than specific). The students will not be presented in such detail as this would have required considerable more time during interviews and perhaps visits to their homes, which was not feasible. The students will, however, be presented through the use of fictitious names. In total I interviewed three students from SC2 and three from SC3 and due to teacher illness in SC1 and difficulties in coordinating visits at the school I did not interview any students from SC1. However, it is assumed that the students in the schools do not differ to any extent given that they all come from similar areas and have similar backgrounds. The two principals will simply referred to as P1 and P2. The following presentation is given in order to “set the stage”.

Greater Crossroads is located in the complex of townships and informal settlements lying to the south of the Cape Town airport. The original Old Crossroads settlement is located within the triangle of Lansdowne, Klipfontein and New Eisleben Roads, the last ironically named after the National Party minister responsible for the Cape’s apartheid clearances of the 1950s. Old Crossroads is therefore sandwiched between the N2 to the north and the Lansdowne Road to the south, on a stretch of this highway which is reportedly the most dangerous in the metro council area for hijackings and violent crime. The city centre is about 18 kilometers away to the west on the main freeway. As its name implies, Crossroads is relatively well located in comparison to many of the other areas to which black South Africans were relegated by

apartheid spatial planning in Cape Town. It is nearly as close to the city centre as the earliest-established formal townships, and it has comparatively favorable access to transport connections. The general area below the airport is congested with the townships and informal settlements occupied mainly by those who are impoverished. The enormous newer township of Khayelitsha is further to the southeast, far out on the sand flats (the Cape Flats). Numerous informal settlements have sprung up around and between the formal townships since 1994. The City of Cape Town has been trying to regularize and formalize these settlements with services and housing delivery, but is reported to be falling behind the rate at which new settlements are forming (personal communication from the Urban Policy of Strategic Information, July, 2003). Under the pressure of the apartheid efforts to clear the area, the well-known original squatter settlement of the 1970s and 80s has given rise to two more formal communities, New Crossroads and Lower Crossroads. In 1985-86, as many as 35 000 Crossroads squatters are believed to have moved to Khayelitsha (Henderson, 1999). After 1991, with the area facing renewed conflict, Lower Crossroads was established as the newest area to accommodate Crossroads outflows. Thus Old Crossroads represents the land which was originally contested in the 1970s and 80s, but much of the population involved in the early struggles was evicted and moved outside the original settlement to New Crossroads. Other inhabitants of this earlier squatter population were relocated by the actions of the apartheid government to the newer settlements within greater Khayelitsha, the last major township to be established in Cape Town, and to the surrounding townships.

Altogether eight teachers were interviewed and this includes the teachers whose classrooms I observed throughout this study. It should be noted that although I mainly observed three classrooms one classroom actually had two teachers and on two occasions the teacher in SC2 was out ill I, therefore, took the opportunity to observe another class in the school as I had already arrived at the school. Thus classroom observations include a total of five teachers. The teachers range in age from those in their early 30s to a few in their mid- to late 40s. Those interviewed included one teacher from SC1, three from SC2 and four teachers from SC3 (all of them are Grade 4 teachers). The classrooms differed in size and number of students.

The Schools:

SC1 is located in the Khayelitsha township. It was the newest of the three schools and the school had only two Grade 4 classrooms. The classroom I observed was located on the second floor in the school's main building, which provided a view over the sprawling township. Looking out the many broken windows one could see the informal shack settlements on both sides of the school that were sandwiched between the permanent housing. The classroom is rather large, but not large enough to sufficiently accommodate the 47 students (23 girls and 24 boys). This makes it difficult for the teacher to get around the room to help all the students individually, often requiring them to bring their work over to the teacher. The students sit in single-set wooden desks clustered together to allow for group work (desks were clustered in groups of five and six so that students were facing each other). The teacher's desk was located in the back of the classroom, but the majority of the teaching took place in the front of the classroom at the chalkboard.

SC2 is located in the township of New Crossroads. The school was established roughly 20 years ago making it the oldest of the three schools. The school comprises three Grade four classrooms (two of them are located in the school's main building). The classroom I mainly observed was not located in the school's main building, rather it was located in a temporary building that has existed for more than 10 years, which was located to one side of the school's main office. The conditions of the classroom were not always conducive to teaching and learning as the wall between the classrooms, located in this building, was in a state of disarray (it was literally falling down) allowing sounds to penetrate from the next room. Also the windows were either missing or broken, which provided a nice breeze in the summer months, but allowed the rain to penetrate in the winter. The teacher's desk was placed in the front of the class next to the chalkboard. The 46 students (21 girls and 25 boys) were crowded into multiple-seat wooden desks arranged in three separate rows in the classroom. Thus the students did not face the front of the class, but faced each other instead. The teacher conducted all the lessons from the front of the classroom, making extensive use of the chalkboard. Hence when teaching took place the students had to readjust their position in an attempt to face the board.

SC3 is located in the township known as Crossroads. The school itself was established as a result of pressure from parents in the community to have more schools in the area. The school has the largest number of students of the three schools and includes four Grade 4 classrooms. As the school is located in a building that was not originally designed as a school the classrooms are small (rooms that would be more appropriate to accommodate 15 students as opposed to almost 40), making it difficult for the teacher to walk around the room to assist students. Accommodating a total of 39 students (17 girls and 22 boys) in the classroom is a major accomplishment, as the students are placed in single-seat plastic chairs arranged around wooden tables that accommodate groups of four, six and eight. There is no room for a teacher's desk in the classroom, therefore, the teacher shares part of the table with a group of students. The group arrangement allows some students to face the front of the class, where the majority of the teaching takes place, while others need to adjust their position when the teacher is teaching at the board.

The Teachers:

Olwetha, the first teacher I met, describes herself as a strong-minded and very authoritarian teacher who is in her early 40s. She feels that the students need to work extra hard to succeed and often tries hard to motivate them. In the classroom I notice a number of posters around the room with numbers, grammatical rules and other useful information that Olwetha has made herself. She tells me the school does not have money to buy such things so she has decided to make them herself. This seems to signal her commitment to her students. Although Olwetha requires hard work from her students, she often confides that many of them will not succeed and that a large number of students will eventually drop out of school. For Olwetha the crime and poverty in the townships makes teaching and learning a challenge as there are many social factors that have an effect on what happens in the classroom.

Avela appears to be a kind and caring teacher, often informing me that she views herself as someone that students can speak to in confidence. She tells me that she generally spends her lunch hour in the classroom so that her students can come to her and talk. She equates herself to a social worker and states that she "needs to be more than just a teacher". Avela discusses the general situation in the community and the high crime in the area and feels that by being "a friend" to her students she may in some way help. Avela is one of the teachers that is most positive to the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction and often uses only Xhosa

during her lessons. She frequently confides that Bantu Education at least gave people like her the opportunity to learn their mother tongue well before making a transition to English and Afrikaans. For her Afrikaans was the difficult part to accept and she felt this was a way to hold the blacks down. For Avela the ideal would be for her students to have Xhosa throughout the primary level.

Thembisa is in her mid 30s and has been teaching for a number of years. She is a very patient and well-organized teacher. The classroom that she teaches in is small and very crowded, but Thembisa says that she tries to make the best of it. Although she admits “in the summer it is like an oven and in the winter the rain comes in from the roof and broken windows, making teaching and learning very difficult”. Despite these difficult conditions she is a very outgoing and cheery person and always ready to help both students and other teachers. She believes that the students do not get enough of an opportunity to use or practice English outside of school. She would like to see the school and the community able to provide more so that the students would be able to come into contact with the language in other settings. However, for Thembisa Xhosa provides her students with an opportunity to access the knowledge that she is trying to teach them.

Nosisa is in her early 30s and is one of the youngest of the teachers. Nosisa is very outgoing and always willing to talk. However, when it comes to her self image as a teacher she often states that she is unsure of her abilities and this seems to be reflected in the way she teaches. Yet, her age and inexperience as a teacher compared to those she works with, most of whom have been teaching for some time, may have an effect and not necessarily her inexperience. Nosisa is often very forthcoming in her discussions about the oppression of apartheid and thinks that things have not changed quickly enough. However, she does have very high hopes for her students and would like to see them continue their education. For her English is the language of empowerment that will open doors for her students, where Xhosa serves only to close such doors.

Zandile is in her late 40s and was one of the teachers who opened up the most during my time at the school. She shared with me not only information related to her job, but often revealed personal information as well. For Zandile teaching was both a joy and a struggle. She tried hard to obtain information that would make her a better teacher and often found contacts through other schools in the area where she was able to share information and find out about

NGOs in the area as well as teacher workshops. She frequently found new and interesting ways to teach lessons and her students seemed to appreciate her efforts. However, Zandile believed that the Department of Education did not support the teachers in the townships enough and was critical that information from them was very often only given out in English and Afrikaans. Furthermore, she argued that township teachers were overlooked when it came to in-service training or teacher workshops. For Zandile the use of Xhosa was helpful in teaching lessons, but she did recognize that her students need English, but was not sure about the best way that could be organized. Sometimes she confided that English should be learned from very early on while other times she would like to see Xhosa used as long as possible as medium of instruction.

Nozuko is a quiet and rather shy teacher. Often during discussions she would remain silent and it seemed that she avoided confrontation. Nozuko did not open up to the same degree as most of the other teachers and thus I was never able to get to know her as well as the other teachers. She did, however, feel that Xhosa was the best medium of instruction for the students, but that they also needed to learn English to succeed. For her English was seen as a necessary tool for economic reasons.

Zoleka is also in her early 30s and is a very self-confident and outgoing. Zoleka has an advanced degree in education and languages. She is very strict and tells me that homework is an important part of her teaching practice. In her class there are a number of students that are “over-agers” (children that are older than what is expected for Grade 4 students) and she maintains that this causes some difficulties, as she often needs to spend extra time with them. For her it would be useful to have a remedial class in the school to help these children and others who have difficulties so that she could concentrate her time more on the other students in her class. For Zoleka, like Nosisa, English is very important and she sees it as a language of opportunity for her students. However, she does state that a “large portion of the students will never make it to high school as most of them drop out after graduating from Grade 7”. For Thembisa English offers her students opportunities for employment.

Ramela is in her mid 40s and is also not a very outspoken teacher. However, she does insist that her students work hard and often spends her lunch breaks in the classroom working with students on lessons. For Ramela the most frustrating issue is the lack of materials in the schools (books and other supplementary materials) and the infrastructure. She believes that

the teachers could have more time to prepare lessons if there were sufficient materials available. For her writing notes on the board for students to copy down is a waste of precious time that could be used for other things.

The students:

Table 7.1 Student information:

Name	Age	Gender	School
Trima	12	Female	SC2
Sipho	11	Male	SC2
Phelo	10	Male	SC2
Lusanda	9	Female	SC3
Phumla	10	Female	SC3
Zukiswa	10	Female	SC3

As mentioned earlier (cf 7.1) a number of categories were created with and from the classroom data and these are directly related to the classroom research questions. Coffey and Atkinson (1996:32) argue in fact that “categories can come from a variety of sources” such as from our theoretical or conceptual frameworks, from hypotheses used to select and identify segments of the data, from preselected codes as a result of our reading or they can be inspired from the foreshadowed research questions. In this study I have relied on both the research questions and the theoretical framework as a source for the categories presented in this chapter. The remainder of the chapter is organized around the six classroom research questions (related to the subheadings in this chapter) with the categories that emerged as a result of the analysis to be found under the following subheadings (as previously mentioned):

- Adjusting to a foreign language as a medium of instruction
- Dealing with language transition – focusing on the students
- How teachers cope in teaching through a foreign language
- Tests and testing
- Which language or languages and for what purposes?
- What do schools and teachers say about the policy

7.2 Adjusting to a foreign language as a medium of instruction

...real education is impossible through a foreign medium...the vernacular medium alone can stimulate originality in thought in the largest number of persons

(Mahatma Gandhi, 1920 cited in Kaschula, 1999:63)

This quote from Gandhi points out the important role that the mother tongue plays in education. Historically throughout Africa the use of the mother tongue in education was emphasized (cf UNESCO, 1968; Odendaal, 1963; van Zyl, 1958; Eiselen, 1952). However, the reasons for this, particularly during the apartheid era in South Africa and Namibia, were more ideological and not pedagogical. The pedagogical justifications for the mother tongue go back centuries and are rarely questioned by majority populations, particularly in most western countries. UNESCO's 1953 report entitled *Vernacular languages in education* stressed the importance of the mother tongue in education, which should "be extended to as late a stage...as possible" (UNESCO, 1968:691). The UNESCO experts based their arguments for the use of the mother tongue in education on linguistic, psychological, pedagogical, and sociological grounds. Those who were opposed to the use of the mother tongue in education based their arguments often on political and economic grounds. Despite all the research showing that children learn better in their mother tongue (cf Akinnaso, 1993; Benson, 2000, 2002, 2004; Cummins, 1979, 1984, 2000; Obanya, 1998; Williams, 1993a, 1993b, 1998), the use of ex-colonial languages as media of instruction, particularly in Africa, still continues. Thus it is important to analyze how teachers and students cope with using these languages as media of instruction.

In looking at the question – How well do pupils adjust to having a foreign language as a medium of instruction? – I discovered that this important issue has been overlooked in much of the research on language in education in South Africa. As discussed in the previous chapter the transitional approach is the only option currently available and as a result it is important to see how well these learners adjust to this foreign medium, namely English.

In analyzing the data, which included observations, interviews and a reading comprehension task, some interesting issues were seen as relevant to the transition from mother tongue to

English as the medium of instruction. These issues will be discussed under the following sections:

- Input of the foreign language
- Exposure to the foreign language
- Parental support
- Mother tongue development
- Knowledge of the foreign language
- Curriculum materials

7.2.1 Input of the foreign language

For Krashen (1985) input is the essential environmental ingredient in learning an additional language. Krashen (1985) discusses input as related to the issue of “fossilization”, that is, second/additional language learners stop short of the native speaker level of development. Also for Wong-Fillmore (1991) and Ringbom (1987) input is seen as a vital factor in learning an additional language. Moreover, these three researchers argue that the quality and the quantity of this input is a crucial element in learning an additional language.

In this study it was discovered through observations, video recordings and interviews that the input of the FL is limited both in quantity and quality. During observations it was recognized that the input is highly controlled by the teacher and it is very selective. The input of the foreign language in the classroom is often restricted to specific subject content as opposed to language usage. Observations also showed that the FL used in the classroom is limited in its quantity and that there is a narrow focus on specific vocabulary words and concepts, which in turn are practiced through the use of repetition and memorization and did not allow for creative language use by the students. Students are restricted to language use consisting of filling in blanks or answering multiple-choice questions. Furthermore, student responses in the foreign language, if they respond at all, are limited to short one-word answers or specific sentences (generally the specific concept that is the focus of the lesson) with no elaboration or explanation given by either students or teachers. It was often observed that students only responded when questions were repeated in their mother tongue as opposed to the foreign language; but that their responses were generally given in English since it was supposedly the medium through which the lesson was given. The following example taken from my

observation notes (November, 2001) serves as an example of this limited input during a typical Geography lesson:

The lesson begins at 9:45. Zandile starts by asking the students to give her names of different kinds of fruit. The students are silent so she gives them some examples in English (for example, apples, plums, bananas). Instead of allowing the students to provide some examples of their own Zandile continues with the lesson and instructs the students to take out their Geography workbooks. Then she says in English “there are three types of fruit”. She asks the students in English to name the three types of fruit (here she is referring to categories of fruit and not specific names of fruit as she asked in the beginning of the lesson). The categories she is trying to get them to name are: citrus, deciduous, and tropical. Zandile then asks in English “how many types of fruit do we have”? No students raise their hands. She asks the question again and 1 boy raised his hand but he gave the wrong answer. The teacher then gives the correct answer in English. She then says “three types of fruit” and asks the class to repeat the answer (three types of fruit). Then she asks the students to repeat “it becomes ripe in summer”.

Zandile continues to read new sentences in English and has the students repeat the sentences from time to time in chorus. In the lesson the students are just repeating what the teacher is saying over and over again. After 20 minutes many of the students appear to be bored with the lesson as it entails the teacher reading sentences about fruit (different categories of fruit and when they are ripe) and the students repeating the sentences in chorus. Finally Zandile has the entire class read the paragraph aloud in chorus and afterwards she has them write down in their workbooks the paragraph that she has written on the board (the sentences that they have been repeating over and over).

In the end she tells the students that they will be tested on what they have just learned. She prompts them one last time and asks: “there are three types of fruit, what are they”? After this roughly forty five minute lesson a few students appear to have gotten the message and raise their hand. The answer given is the following: “there are three types of fruit”, which the teacher accepts as correct. In the end she writes the test questions on the board and has the students copy them in their workbooks. However, before they answer the “test” questions she goes over them one more time and even provides the answers to the questions verbally. The students are then just required to just memorize the answers and not to find them out for themselves. At 11:05 the lesson and the test are over.

In this lesson the students were not encouraged to provide any discussion of the fruit nor did students ask questions. The lesson simply required that students repeat the specific information the teacher was focusing on. This same lesson was observed in the two other schools with very similar results, that is teachers required students to repeat over and over the information about the three kinds of fruit and no elaboration nor discussion followed these memorization sessions. Furthermore, in providing students the answer to the “test”

beforehand required that the students simply need to remember the information given. The paragraph that was copied into their workbooks provided this information, but students were never obliged to rely on this text as the answers were provided orally beforehand.

During observations of other lessons it was noticed that students often gave answers to teachers' inquiries in the form of specific terms or concepts that were the focus of the lesson and in general these were not in complete sentences. Students were never challenged to attempt this type of elaboration either. An example of this type of lesson was observed during a Social Studies lesson in October 2001 in School SC3. The lesson itself was about different forms of communication and transportation. Here the teacher, Nosisa, began the lesson in Xhosa to demarcate classroom management; she then switched to English to ask the students to give her examples of different ways to communicate. Her questioning was focused on the narrow subject matter of communication. In the initial part of the lesson Nosisa asked the following question: "can you tell me about the different ways to communicate"? Having asked the question initially in English Nosisa did not receive any response from the students. Furthermore, her input was limited to only the specific subject knowledge with no further explanation given in the FL, that is, she did not attempt to rephrase the question or provide additional information. The response from the students was complete silence at which time Nosisa switched back to Xhosa to ask the students the same question, which resulted in immediate response from the pupils, but their responses were limited to one-word answers in English only, for example, phone, letter, etc. and not in complete sentences. After providing a few answers the students became stuck so Nosisa prompts them by saying "computer" then one boy gives the answer TV while others say radio, fax, newspapers, loudspeaker and posters. Nosisa wraps up the lesson by telling the students, in English, that the Internet is another way to communicate with the outside world. Furthermore, she adds the term international, which appears to confuse the students as this seems to be a term that they are not familiar with. However, she leaves the lesson at that and chooses not to elaborate further. Through this example it is possible to see how the input of English is limited to the specific concepts that are the focus of the lesson (similar to inserting words in a multiple-choice test).

An excellent example of the possibilities of instruction in the mother tongue as opposed to the FL was observed during a Xhosa lesson also in October 2001. During this lesson Zandile read a story to the learners in Xhosa. The following is the description of this lesson from my observation notes:

The story was about God telling the different animals to go out into the forest and find themselves a tail, but in the story the Meercat was lazy and did not want to get up early to do what God asked him and he decided to sleep late. When he woke up the Meercat asked the mouse to find him a tail since he was going out into the forest to get his own tail. The mouse agreed to help and the only tail left for the Meercat was a small tail. After reading the story Zandile began to ask the students about the story (all the questions and student responses were in Xhosa).¹⁶⁷ She first asked them what they had learned from the story. One student replied that “we must wake up early for school”. Another said that “if you cannot do something yourself you must find someone to do it for you”. Finally, one student commented that “we must not be lazy”.

What was most unique is that Zandile did not only ask the students about the content of the story (what they had learned from it), but she challenged them as well. The story itself was read as if it were being read to a small child by the child’s grandmother. What Zandile did was to ask the students to guess the age of the child in the story – to analyze the story – by asking them to look at the type of language used by the child. Here the students were challenged to look at the grammatical mistakes found in the story to help them ascertain the child’s age. It was interesting to see this type of *critical language awareness* (Fairclough, 1995) and compare this lesson to an English lesson where students were never challenged in this way and where the lessons generally entailed only memorization of passages of text and filling-in-blanks afterwards. Thus by looking through the data to find what Strauss and Corbin (1990:109) define as *negative or alternative cases* of language input has highlighted that when the mother tongue is used as opposed to the FL students are more likely to be challenged to use language critically rather than just memorizing empty facts and in doing so challenge what Freire (1970) refers to as the *banking concept* of education. The banking concept views students as having empty minds passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside. For Freire banking education works as follows:

...Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into “containers,” into “receptacles” to be “filled” by the teacher...

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and storing the deposits” (Freire, 1970:52-53.).

¹⁶⁷ Although the lesson was in Xhosa the teacher translated the students’ responses for me and she discussed the story with me beforehand so that I knew what the story was about. The description in my notes reflects our discussion and the student responses were translated and written down simultaneously.

Through the example of the Xhosa story lesson we can see how Zandile breaks this cycle described by Freire in which the teacher deposits or fills the students with information that she will withdraw later and rather provides an example of a lesson in which students are challenged to think critically.

In addition to the quantity of the input through simple application of repetitions the quality of that input is important. In the model by Wong-Fillmore (1991) quality refers to less proficient speakers of the target language,¹⁶⁸ which in this case refers to the teachers as they are unable to provide the learners with an adequate representation of the language they are attempting to learn. Quality also refers to the classroom itself in the extent to which learners are themselves required to play a role in getting the social contact needed for language learning, and again the model is based on immigrants where children often come into contact with native speakers of the language that they are attempting to learn. However, in the case of the schools in this study they are in a homogeneous setting and thus they do not come into contact with native English speakers, and instead they must rely solely on the input of the teachers. Ultimately quality requires a setting that offers students access to meaningful input, and opportunities to practice the language in the context of structured instructional activities.

Chapter 4 I present the argument by Wong-Fillmore (1991) that if the TL speakers (in this case the teachers) are themselves less competent speakers of the TL the input they provide for the learners may not be an adequate representation of what the learners should be striving for. In the context of this study this is seen as a key issue given that the teacher plays a major role with little or no peer learning taking place (Ringbom, 1987; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). It is important for me to explain that the term “target language” is Wong-Fillmore’s term and not my own (as mentioned in 4.6), but in this case English can be seen as a type of target language for these students as it represents the language that is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 onwards and a language they are required to use when taking exams. By using the term in this way I do not suggest the monolingual thinking associated with it, but highlight the dilemma faced by the students where they do not necessarily have a language choice.

What needs to be kept in mind is that for the students in this investigation the teacher is the major source of input of the FL. During the study it was observed that the FL used by the

¹⁶⁸ In this case English serves as the target language as it is both the medium of instruction and the language that teachers are attempting to teach their students.

teachers themselves was in fact not representative of the type of English language that learners should strive for. Teachers were observed as consistently making grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. Thus the teacher's input was often incorrect and they did not correct their pupils' language usage in the FL either, the result being that incorrect language usage was reinforced. There are, however, controversies over whether the provision of *negative evidence* is necessary or even helpful in additional language development, which was not discussed in the model by Wong-Fillmore (1991). Negative evidence refers to some type of input that lets the learner know that a particular form is *not* acceptable according to the norms of the target language (Mitchell & Myles, 2001). In additional language interaction this may be displayed by formal correction offered by the teacher. The problem is that correction often appears to be ineffective. It appears that "learners often cannot benefit from correction, but instead continue to make the same mistake however much feedback offered" (Mitchell & Myles, 2001:22). Mitchell and Myles (2001) point out that there are other researchers who believe that any natural language must be learned from *positive* as opposed to negative evidence. However, the debate concerning positive or negative evidence is far from being resolved. Despite the opposing views what remains important is that they both "view the learner as operating and developing a relatively autonomous L2 system, and see interaction as a way of feeding that system with more or less fine-tuned input data, whether positive or negative" (Mitchell & Myers, 2001:22). Certainly if input is limited to certain sentences or phrases in English, as seen through the examples above, we can say that the input students receive is filled with routines and patterns, a limited range of vocabulary, and little new syntax (Krashen, 1985).

Another issue apparent during classroom observations showed that teacher talk in the FL was generally text-bound, again limiting the input available. Here teachers often had to read from the textbooks and worksheets when using English as opposed to when Xhosa was used where teachers were able to speak more freely. The teachers themselves were aware of their limited ability in English and confided that they felt this was a serious problem for both them and their students. Thus teachers were not confident speakers of the language. The following statements from some of the Grade 4 teachers highlight this sentiment:

"Some of us [the teachers] find it difficult to express the content in English; it's difficult" (interview: Thembisa, 28/11/01).

“We are using it [English], but because it is a foreign language we are not fluent” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

“We are using English because of the kids you know, in Grades 1-3 in that phase is Xhosa and then in Grade 4 there is a bridging, a grade where we are um **having** to teach **everything** in English. So they [teachers] are trying to do that more especially to translate in Xhosa because of the pupils” (interview: Thembisa, 28/11/01 emphasis original).

“I would say plus minus 50% of the teachers are competent. As you know English is a foreign language so at times it’s difficult to just get through the language and not being the mother tongue”(interview: Zandile, 27/11/01).

“...even if we use English we are using mixed terms...we want to speak English solely but we cannot” (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/01).

These statements by the teachers themselves highlight their own concerns that they *need* to teach subject content through a language that they themselves see as foreign and a language that they are neither competent nor confident in. As quoted above Thembisa stresses that now they *have* to teach *everything* through the medium of English, but that they translate into Xhosa to assist their pupils (this translation aspect will be discussed in 7.4.1.3). Whereas Nosisa comments that they would like to use English only, but points to the difficulty in doing so and how this leads to a mixing of the two languages. The central aspect here is that teachers serve as the main source of input for the language and the fact that they admittedly feel that their own knowledge of the language is questionable poses a serious problem for students. Thus pupils are modeling their speech and communication patterns on less proficient and less confident models of non-mother tongue English speakers. This suggests that these same pupils run the risk of never adequately being able to master the English language for successful communication outside of the classroom, in the real world. This fact was recognized nearly thirty years ago (Young, 1978). Even then Young suggested that the “resulting communicative incompetence has far-reaching social consequences” such as wasted national productivity (Young, 1978:189). Moreover, nearly 20 years later Young’s own experience as a teacher trainer in schools where the learners are mother tongue speakers of African languages results in the following observation:

[My experiences] show that much classroom teaching is in the first language, rather than in English, in all standards. This derives, variously, from established African first-language teachers’ lack of proficiency in English; excessively large classes; indifferent bureaucratic support; poor textbook resourcing; and inadequate teacher training to the demands of English as a medium of instruction (Young, 1995:107-108).

If these teachers are themselves products of the type of education described by Young (1978; 1995) then we may question what the long-term costs are of not implementing mother tongue education as opposed to the short-term costs, which are often used as an argument in favor of keeping foreign languages as a medium of instruction. André Gaum, the then Western Cape MEC (Minister of Education and Culture), believes that the cost of failure at school and the economic and social implications outweigh the cost of providing education in the mother tongue (Financial Mail, 2001:33). Often these social implications are overlooked when the cost argument is used. Ultimately, we may ask the question: who will then correct the teachers' own linguistic mistakes (mistakes not in the mother tongue, but in the FL) that were observed in the classroom? Moreover, how can we organize education so that learners will be able to receive sufficient and comprehensible input?

7.2.2 Exposure to the foreign language

Based on both observations and interviews another point that was recognized as relevant to the transition from mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction is the fact that students are limited in their exposure to the language outside of the classroom setting. In general when we speak of second language acquisition, the case is that most students are immigrants in countries where they come into contact with the target language both inside and outside of the classroom setting (cf 4.6.3.1 Wong-Fillmore's description of the typical L2 learner) and as a result they have the opportunity to learn the language both formally and informally. However, it has been argued (cf 4.6.2) that this definition, developed from our understanding of immigrant groups mainly in the North, is insufficient for dealing with the realities of the students in this study and those in similar situations. As a result, we need to understand the factors affecting learners' additional language acquisition in these types of contexts according to their own reality. Thus the English language infrastructure (Setati et al., 2002) becomes one of the most significant contextual differences. The language exposure outside the classroom is seen as an important factor given that the learners in this context must rely heavily on the input they receive in the classroom.

In analyzing the data the limited exposure to the FL became obvious as students confided that they seldom heard or used English outside of the classroom setting and that if they did it was often with others who like themselves were not proficient in the language. Therefore, in

relation to Wong-Fillmore's (1991) model these learners do not have social contact with people who are mother tongue speakers of the TL. When asked if they used English outside of the classroom, one Grade 4 student¹⁶⁹ responded "no never" (interview: Lusanda, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani), while another Grade 4 student acknowledged that she tried to use English with some of her friends "just for fun", as a game, "but that we mostly use Xhosa" (interview: Phumla, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani). Moreover, Lusanda points to the multitude of languages found in the townships stating that she "uses Xhosa and some of them [her friends] speak Zulu so I use a mixture of African languages" (interview: Lusanda, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani). Also the teachers, most of whom live in the townships admitted that both the students and they themselves rarely used English outside of the classroom and if there was a need it was generally to speak to the "others", the "umlungu" (meaning a white person in Xhosa) (interview: Avela 26/11/01). What Avela seems to point to here is that speakers of African languages are required to speak English (or in some cases Afrikaans) and that the mother tongue speakers of English or Afrikaans are not necessarily expected to (or required) to learn the African languages.

It is important to note that in South Africa there are in reality two different language-learning situations, two sides of one coin, and additional language learning needs to be organized accordingly. On the one side of the coin, in the case of many white Afrikaans-speaking learners and middle- and upper-class colored and black South Africans, the reality is that learning English is closer to a SLA situation. In taking the argument by Phillipson (1991) and VanPatten (1990) SLA then refers to language acquisition in an environment with native speakers of the language. In analyzing the realities of the different language-learning situations that exist in South Africa a majority of the learners in the above mentioned group find themselves living in areas where they not only come into contact with the language inside the classroom, and they are generally taught the language by mother tongue speakers or those highly proficient in the language, but also they come into contact with the language on the playground and in the communities where they live. This situation allows students the opportunity to learn the language both formally and informally, providing a considerable amount of exposure to the language. Additionally, many of these children have parents who are themselves knowledgeable in the language.

¹⁶⁹ Student names are also fictitious to ensure anonymity.

On the other side of the coin, for the majority of rural South Africans and those living in the townships (this is the majority of the total population), English is seldom heard nor used outside of the classroom setting (cf Phillipson, 1991 for other examples). For these learners they are truly in a *sink or swim* situation, as they are required to use English only as a LOLT after Grade 3. For these children there is little chance to receive informal opportunities to learn or practice the language outside of the classroom setting nor do they have opportunities to come into contact with native mother tongue speakers of the language. The result is that these learners face a FL learning situation as opposed to an SLA situation, and the failure of the Department of Education to publicly acknowledge this paradox and to take steps to deal with it leaves many of these learners unable to swim in an English ocean.

While making observations in the schools I would often go out to the playground during lunch breaks and recess and observe the students interact with one another. On these occasions I never heard any of the students or the teachers using English. Furthermore, during the months I spent in the townships I often went into the different shops in the area and the only time English was used was when someone was speaking to me, an umlungu. Thus for the students opportunities to receive exposure to the language outside of the classroom is often limited or non-existent. Krashen (1985) suggests that the relationship between exposure and proficiency really entails comprehensible input, which may also come from the classroom. However, given the question of that input in the classroom in this study we may ask the following: Would the benefit of better informal environments in which students would be able to practice their language skills with native or near-native speakers of English increase proficiency in the language? Perhaps we should, at least, re-examine the way education is organized in these schools.

It appears that only recently have other researchers given the contextual differences that exist with respect to language learning in South Africa serious consideration (Setati et al., 2002:73). Nevertheless, these researchers only see these contextual differences as applying to the rural versus urban context and do not take into account that in many township communities English is truly a foreign language, which means that the language is generally not heard nor used in the environment. The bottom line is that apart from the limited exposure to the language in the classroom setting, these learners do not come into contact with the language in other situations. A possible explanation for the conclusion made by Setati et al. (2002) about the contextual differences applying to only rural versus urban is that their study

in the urban areas appears to have focused only on multilingual schools, in which the context differs greatly in comparison to township schools (Plüddemann et al., 2000 provide a detailed description of various schools which highlight these contextual differences). Thus the analysis by Setati et al. (2002) fails to account for the differences that exist in the various urban contexts and not only those that exist between urban and rural. Ultimately, the irony is that the Department is aware of this situation, as one of my informants from the Department of Education stated:

“The community speaks a different language and the school speaks another language...there is no continuity between home and school. We know that if the gap between home and school is that big no effective learning can take place and what happens at school is completely divorced from what happens at home” (interview: Department of Education official, 26/02/02).

This variation between the home and school language may greatly influence the students’ ability to adjust to a foreign language as a medium of instruction and this mismatch may affect the ability of the parents to assist their children.

7.2.3 Parental support?

Parental support is known to be a contributing factor in school success. However, due to the mismatch between home and school language this may be problematic for some parents and thus some parents may be unable to assist with homework. Still, helping with homework is only one way of providing support and parents do support their children’s’ education in other ways. In this section I will present some of the responses from the teachers concerning parental support. This will be followed by a discussion of support as seen from the parents’ perspective. These will be presented in individual sections according to the different voices.

7.2.3.1 The teachers’ thoughts on parental support

The mismatch between the home and the school language may have a role to play in the children’s ability to adjust to using the FL as the medium of instruction. In general, teachers appear to have more negative attitudes when referring to the issue of parental support as highlighted by the comments made by two Grade 4 teachers.

“Most of the parents are unable to help their children with homework because many of them have never gone to school and they do not speak English, the language that most of the homework is given in. Our parents can only say that *I never went to school* and they don’t understand” (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/01).

“[Assisting their children with homework] is a major problem because others are illiterate and they’ve got a problem they **can’t** help their kids (interview: Zandile, 27/11/01).

This last quote plays into the elitist argument suggesting that those who are illiterate are not intelligent. This quote specifically views literacy along the lines of the *autonomous model* of literacy (Street, 1984), which conceptualizes literacy in technical terms and relates it to functional aspects such as reading and writing. For Street (1984) this form of literacy makes broad generalizations from what is in reality a narrow culture-specific literacy practice based on the “essay-text” form of literacy. “The model then assumes a single direction in which literacy development can be traced, and associates it with ‘progress’, ‘civilization’, individual liberty and social mobility” (Street, 1984:2). Dissatisfied with the autonomous model of literacy, Street (1984) proposes an *ideological model* of literacy that views literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society. These embedded power structures can be seen in the responses from the two teachers who view parents as illiterate implying that they are not literate in English as opposed to the mother tongue, which reflects how literacy is often defined and measured throughout Africa i.e. literacy in the former colonial languages (Armove & Graff, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In this view literacy means, at the very least, reading and writing in the *dominant* language. This suggests that relations between the dominant culture and the dominated culture dictate the parameters of literacy and that the Xhosa-speaking parents are unable to use their own literacies (i.e. literacy in their mother tongue) given that it is the mainstream culture who decides what constitutes literacy and in what language (McKay, 1993). It is also this dominant group who decides in what language education should be given as English is the only realistic option available to learners beyond the Grade 3 level. The fact that English is the only option after Grade 3 provides differential access to literacy for those who have the language as their mother tongue as opposed to those who have to acquire the language as an additional language and reflects the power relations within society (cf Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1996; 1997, 1998, 2001). However, it is not only the policy-makers and the elites who have the power to decide, but also publishers are able to exert their control with reference to the issue of language and literacy (cf 7.2.6 for this discussion). Ultimately there is

a failure to include the range of languages that exist within South Africa in defining literacy and literacy practices, as the focus appears to be on English only at the expense of other languages. In recognizing a multiplicity of literacies allows us to ask questions about the nature of power relationships between them. By recognizing that parents can help in other ways, through the use of literacy in the mother tongue, teachers would send a strong message about the possibilities of language.

Another Grade 4 teacher echoes this thinking suggesting that parents are not literate in English¹⁷⁰ and associates it with a lack of training:

“It’s now that the community that we are working in, most of them [the parents] are illiterate and not properly trained” (interview: Thembisa, 28/11/01).

The issue of not being “properly trained” can be traced back to the history of black education in South Africa, because many parents and teachers themselves are products of a Bantu education system (cf chapter 2), an educational system that has been questioned by many (cf Mbamba, 1982; Hartshorne, 1992; Holmarsdottir, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Brock-Utne, 2000a; Heugh, 2003, etc.), which promoted a specific kind of education, based on a particular ideology for the majority black population and an education to serve the needs of the whites by providing a manual labor force.

In talking about parental support one of the teachers, Avela, commented that many parents come home from work late and that when they get home they have many chores to do, which leaves little or no time to help their children with homework.

Furthermore, during interviews with the students I discovered that only one of the students actually lived with both parents while four lived with one parent only and one lived with an uncle. Moreover, teachers confided that some of the learners were living with foster parents as their parents had died, while others lived with older siblings or other family members (especially grandparents). Thus we can question the issue of teachers’ perceptions concerning the lack of parental support as support may come from other family members or other members of the community.

¹⁷⁰ This teacher’s response here is a continuation of another question which specifically deals with English and in her response here she is making the connection to English and illiteracy.

7.2.3.2 The parents and other caretakers speak about support

In obtaining data about parental support and support from others, I relied on the information from parents and other caretakers (four in total) from SC2 and SC3. The discussions with the parents were not formal interviews; rather the information was obtained during informal conversations with parents at the schools and noted in my research diary. The only formal interview was taken with the mother of Zukiswa and thus referenced as such. I also gathered information with the assistance of a master student connected to the LOITASA project who had a focus group discussion with five parents and other primary caretakers from SC2 and four parents and other primary caretakers from one of the LOITASA schools located in the vicinity of SC1.

Although some parents admitted that they may have little time to help with homework, often due to the distance they must travel¹⁷¹ to and from work, this does not necessarily mean that they are unable to provide support in other ways. One of the parents I spoke with had a similar description, as Avela (mentioned in the previous section), stating that she worked in the suburbs and that she often had to leave early in the morning to get to work and came home late in the evening, “leaving little time to help with homework”. While other parents had live-in jobs, which “allowed them only to be at home on the weekends” (interview: mother of Zukiswa, 12/10/01). For these parents the time at home had to be used for shopping, washing and so on leaving little “time for helping with school work”. For many of these parents a relative such as the child’s aunt, grandmother or older sibling, often helps out at home during the week, while the parent is away. Thus parents may not always be available to help directly, but may find other ways to provide support. For example, the mother of Zukiswa, a student from SC3, told me that she has a live-in position and that during the week her sister, Zukiswa’s aunt, stays with Zukiswa and that the aunt is the one helping with homework. Whereas other parents confided that they had not been to school or had little schooling and thus felt unable to help their children with their schoolwork.

During a recent visit to South Africa one of the researchers connected to the LOITASA project (and in turn this project) assisted me in probing further into the issue of support.

¹⁷¹ In chapter 5 and the introduction to this chapter I describe how the townships are located far from the city and the suburbs, where many parents work as domestic workers. During the year and seven months I spent in Cape Town I became aware that many of these parents spend up to two hours or more per day traveling to and from work, which may leave little time when they get home to assist their children with homework.

During two separate focus group discussions Heidi Biseth, a Norwegian Master student¹⁷² writing her thesis in connection with the LOITASA project, asked the parents and many grandparents present about the support issue. What she was able to find out is that the grandparents most often helped with homework, but that older siblings or even neighbors (for example, high school students that lived in the neighborhood) were mentioned as providing assistance (cf Biseth, forthcoming). This shows that despite the restricted view held by teachers that parents cannot or do not help, parents may make other arrangements to support their children. Therefore support may be direct or indirect and often teachers may not be aware of this.

Furthermore, during the focus group discussions, conducted by Biseth, the participants mentioned that homework was always given in English and that homework in Xhosa was never sent home with the students. This corroborates the information provided by some of the teachers that homework is associated with those subjects where English is the medium of instruction. Additionally, I noted this during my observations as I never saw homework assignments in Xhosa sent home. I argue this sends a powerful message where homework is one of the domains reserved for English only, a high variety language associated with diglossia (cf Ferguson, 1972 and Fishman, 1964; 1967) leaving the Xhosa-speaking communities unable to use their own literacies (Street, 1984) in this domain and a practice that does not recognize the multiplicity of literacies that exist within the community.

¹⁷² Heidi Biseth is writing her Master thesis as part of the LOITASA project. After I returned from South Africa I became Heidi's thesis advisor and some of the data she collected during her fieldwork in South Africa, in September-October 2004, is used to supplement the information I collected previously during my own fieldwork. I specifically asked Heidi to assist me in collecting the additional data and to follow-up on this issue while conducting her own data collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her assistance.

7.2.4 Mother tongue development

There are words that are in English that are not in Xhosa...so you have to construct a whole explanation in Xhosa...and some of [them] are speaking that deep, deep Xhosa which we don't know because we are grown up here and we are running away from that proper deep Xhosa (Crawford, 1999:33)

This quote above describes the situation where the mother tongue of those living in the urban areas is not necessarily the same as those coming from the rural communities. In her study Crawford (1999) describes how this can be problematic for the health services in these communities. Moreover, Crawford (1999) draws attention to the need to develop the mother tongue among Xhosa-speaking nurses in many of the township clinics to incorporate the “deep Xhosa” into their everyday vocabulary. Based on interviews mainly with teachers and other school personnel I found that the mother tongue issue in general was an area of great concern in the schools. For some of these teachers the difference between the “deep Xhosa” and the everyday language in the townships was something they saw as a problem in the education system and they felt that the curriculum materials should reflect these differences. In particular two of the eight teachers emphasized this point, suggesting that the books should be reflective of the way in which the students use their language(s) and perhaps in their own way they were arguing for the recognition of a multiplicity of languages. One teacher, for example, describes the textbook situation as follows:

“They have difficulty in Xhosa because Xhosa is a difficult language...you see it is very difficult because some of the things that are asked [in the textbooks] we don't use. The language that is used [in the textbooks] some of the things we don't use in our day to day talking... The topic that is taught is more formal. Here in the Townships that we don't use Xhosa when you talk, the whole sentence in Xhosa we put a little bit of English or other African languages...But when you teach Xhosa it's going to be Xhosa and then they have the difficulty” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Thus for Avela it would be more helpful if the materials developed took into account the everyday language used by the students. However, teachers have shown that they are creative and that many of them do produce their own materials. For example, Nozuko told me of a radio program about trees that she used to develop materials for a Natural Science lesson. The idea is that perhaps teachers could think of different ways to use the materials that they

produce themselves that incorporates some of the everyday language used by the students and in this way they could utilize the learners' mother tongue and include it in a variety of subjects. The work by Cummins (1979) suggests some support for this idea given that solid subject-matter teaching in the first language provides the learner with the *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP), the ability to utilize language to learn and discuss abstract ideas. Thus a good education in the mother tongue also provides the learner with subject-matter information. This information along with the learner's CALP can be of assistance in making English input more comprehensible (Krashen, 1985). As Krashen (1985:18) argues "the limited English proficient child who knows [the] subject matter has a far better chance of understanding subject-matter instruction in English than the limited English [proficient] child who is behind in subject matter".

Yet, some of the teachers confided that the difference in book versus spoken language was problematic as they were not prepared to deal with it since many of them have little training or only teacher qualifications in the old system.

"I don't have any teacher's degree... You see here in South Africa we were trained from standard 8 to the Secondary School" (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Still others replied that "I have done the PTC" (interview: Olwetha, 23/11/01) while another stated "I was doing PTC so after 2 years we are given diplomas" (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/01). This variation in the different teaching qualifications serves to demonstrate the difficulty in determining which teachers have sufficient qualifications and which do not (cf table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Qualifications of teachers in the study

	SC1	SC2	SC3
Grade 10 + 2 yrs. teacher training	1	3	3
Bachelor in Education	NA	NA	1

Furthermore, when probing into the issue further one teacher highlighted how the qualification issue, particularly for black teachers was a confusing issue stating that "they [apartheid government] were always changing the system" (interview: Ramela, 22/11/01). Hartshorne (1992) argues that even the quality of teacher training during the heyday of

apartheid was reflective of the qualifications and background of the staff of many of the black teacher training colleges. Hartshorne (1992:231) further notes as the pre-1948 teachers “disappeared from the scene and were replaced by teachers who themselves were the products of Bantu Education, the system...progressively deteriorated and quality...declined”. For many of the teachers participating in this study this scenario is true as the majority have been teaching for roughly 20 years and are, therefore, products of Bantu Education. Furthermore, it is noted by Hartshorne (1992) that in the period 1976-80 students in Standard 9-10 complained about “badly qualified” teachers as teachers had difficulty in explaining and clarifying difficult concepts and problems, despite the increased emphasis on English and Afrikaans during Bantu Education. Furthermore, this led to a reduction in the emphasis placed on the African languages in teacher training and one can only speculate that this would spill over in the teachers’ ability to effectively provide additional support required by the students.

Moreover, this is supported by the statistics from the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) which show that in 1994 the majority of the teachers considered underqualified were Africans (cf table 7.3).

Table 7.3: Teacher underqualification in 1994

African	Colored	Indian	White	Total
45.5%	41.13%	7.35%	1%	35.8%

(Source SAIRR, 1996:122)

Thus in this study only one of the eight teachers would be considered fully qualified with a Bachelor in Education (a four-year degree) while the remaining seven would be considered underqualified within the current system, as they only have Std. 8 (Grade 10) plus two years of teacher training. The current system requires Matric (Grade 12) plus three years of teacher training or a Bachelor of Education (a four-year B.Ed. degree).

The teachers often drew attention to the issue of low mother tongue development, during interviews and in the many discussions that took place in the classrooms, as being problematic. A majority of the teachers felt that the students suffered in their English ability because *their foundation in their own mother tongue was insufficient*. For the teachers this means that students had very little to build on when learning English. Teachers claimed that

“having the mother tongue as medium of instruction until only the Grade 4 level was difficult for both them and their students” (interview: Zandile, 27/11/01). The transition occurred *too soon* and it was *too rapid*. All eight teachers mentioned that the transition in Grade 4 coincided with the addition of new subjects, which they argued complicated matters even more. Not only were students required to “learn in a new language, but that new subjects were also being added” (interview: Ramela, 22/11/01). The teachers also stated that students’ literacy in their “mother tongue was very weak given that it was limited to only three years as a medium of instruction” across the curriculum and that “it was difficult to have the added pressure to learn in a foreign language from Grade 4 onwards” (interview: Olwetha, 22/11/01). This has implications for additive bilingualism, which entails a gaining of competence in the second/additional language while the mother tongue is maintained. In reducing the language, the mother tongue of the students, to a mere subject after Grade 3 may allow us to question if the language is maintained or simply just tolerated. It is argued that additive bilingualism can only develop in social contexts where both languages are valued and reinforced. Research by Cummins (1979; 1984; 2000) shows that the two languages are able to develop independently of each other up to the BICS level i.e. in everyday communication, but that CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency) depends, to some extent, on the stage of development reached in the mother tongue. Research on the *Threshold Project* (1990) in South Africa demonstrated that many black pupils actually suffered from subtractive bilingualism as a result of the sudden switch from the mother tongue to a second/additional language as medium of instruction as opposed to an additive form of bilingualism proposed in the LiEP (Macdonald, 1990).

In addition, this study shows that the transition in Grade 4 from the mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction posed another problem in that now new subjects (as mentioned above) are also added along with a new medium. In one of the schools the Head of the intermediate phase commented:

“The switch from Xhosa to English in Grade 4 is especially problematic because in Grade 4 the learners are now moving from the foundation phase to the upper primary phase. In this new phase students are now being introduced to new subjects that they did not have in the foundation phase. In addition to the new subjects then these learners are introduced to a new language as well and that this is very confusing for them” (personal communication, 24/01/02).

The transition is now even occurring earlier than was typical¹⁷³ in the past, which coincides with the move from the foundation phase (Grades 1-3) to the intermediate phase (Grades 4-7) in Curriculum 2005. Furthermore, research in South Africa shows that at best learners who have been learning English as a second language for four years have an English vocabulary of about 800 words, but that the requirements for the Grade 5 textbooks when they switch to English as the medium of instruction were at least 7 000 words (Macdonald, 1990).

The low level of mother tongue development was noted by another of the Grade 4 teachers who commented that “students are not given enough **time** to learn Xhosa before they make the switch to English” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01) and she argues for the use of Xhosa throughout the primary phase.

“That’s why I say that I would like the primary school to have Xhosa as the medium of instruction. I would like that in order for them to know the language and that we [now] only teach in Xhosa when we are teaching Xhosa [as a subject] and not when we are teaching History. But you see we are supposed to teach for example Math in English but we don’t because we know it’s going to be difficult because they are still trying to understand the subject” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Here Avela not only recognizes the lack of support for the mother tongue across the curriculum, but she also points out the informal or covert policy that is in effect, which results in the continued use of the mother tongue as the main means of communication. This can be seen as a way in which teachers are challenging the official policy by their classroom practice. Other researchers have likewise pointed to this language paradox, shedding light on the fact that teaching and learning is not taking place through English, but in the mother tongue (Heugh, 2000; Plüddemann et al., 2000; Desai, 2001, forthcoming; Probyn, forthcoming).

The school principals recognize that there is a discrepancy in the assumed language of instruction and the actual language use. The principal in SC2 describes this paradox as follows:

“Now what they [the teachers] are doing, the History lesson, which is supposed to be taught in English, they will be teaching it in Xhosa. Even English language grammar they will teach it through the medium of Xhosa and use English words [terms]” (interview: P1, 27/11/01).

¹⁷³ In the Threshold Project reported by Macdonald (1990) the switch from the mother tongue to the additional language took place at Grade 5. However, most schools are now making the switch at the Grade 4 level.

The overall problem of this is that at the end of the day students are required to take all their exams in English and they do not have the option of using their mother tongue to write their exams. Many people (teachers, principals, Department officials and those knowledgeable in language policy issues) declared that this becomes problematic in that the learners gain partial knowledge in their mother tongue, given that most of the explanation is given in this language, but that the terms and concepts are only known in English (cf 7.4.1.2 for the possible consequences of this). The outcome of this is that students are taking exams with partial knowledge in two languages in addition to being required to use the foreign language, which they are not proficient in, to express their subject knowledge. This is acknowledged by one of the Grade 4 teachers, and in her argument she recognizes the discrimination of this practice.

“The Afrikaans and English-speaking people are taught in their language and they receive their exams in their language. It’s only us [the African language speakers] that are examined in a foreign language” (interview: Zandile, 27/11/01).

Furthermore, this practice of requiring, for the most part, only speakers of African languages to take exams in a language in which they are not proficient serves to highlight the hegemony that still exists in the society as it is the powerful group that limits the freedom and actions of those who are powerless and suppressed (Habermas, 1987; Wodak, 1989). In other words, as Hartshorne (1992:188 emphasis added) asserts the decisions are still being “taken *for* and not *by* those most closely involved”. This underscores how hegemony works and the ways in which differential power is circulated and used in education and the larger society.

Another related factor that was mentioned by Avela, which reaffirms her desire to have the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, is that the “students also suffer in both reading and spelling in their mother tongue” because now (in Grade 4) it is only taught as a subject (interview: Avela, 26/11/01) and the language is not reinforced through its use across the curriculum. As a result the development of the mother tongue stagnates as its use in education is reduced to a “mere subject”. The consequences of reducing the mother tongue to a mere subject after Grade 3 also affects its continued development (cf Desai, 2003). Moreover, it was observed that the amount of time spent teaching the mother tongue was significantly less than i.e. teaching English as a subject. Examples of this were noted where the amount of time spent on the mother tongue was approximately 15 minutes per day (it was only taught on average of three days per week) in comparison to the subject English that received 1-1.5 hours

and was being taught every day in addition to English being reinforced in other subject areas. The mother tongue then is forced not only to compete for prestige, but also for equality in the amount of time allocated in the curriculum.

The inadequate foundation that students have in their mother tongue is believed to continue as learners advance in the educational system as the African languages, after Grade 4, are taught only as subjects. This may pose a problem later as their ability to use their own mother tongue for academic purposes will deteriorate (cf Desai, forthcoming). One teacher commented on this problem as students proceed to higher grades.

“If they cannot write the Xhosa words I have to write for them when they get to those higher classes. They can speak it but they cannot write it” (interview: Zoleka, 28/11/01).

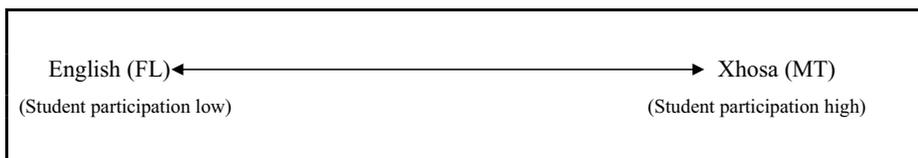
This teacher mentions that learners are able to speak the language, but their writing ability in their mother tongue suffers due to its insufficient development.

In any classroom where English is used as the medium of instruction but it is not the mother tongue or main language of the student's home or community, Mercer (2000) argues that teachers have the multiple task of teaching the English language and any specific subject content. Furthermore, as noted earlier Krashen (1985) argues that children with limited proficiency in the medium of instruction, but who know the subject matter are better off than those who are limited in the language of instruction and behind in the subject matter. The point is that students in this study are both limited in the medium of instruction and their own mother tongue is not being used in teaching them the subject matter nor is it being more highly developed. “When the goal is basic communicative ability for all students in a school setting, and when it is assumed that the child's native language will remain the primary language, it may be more efficient to begin second or *foreign language* teaching later” (Lightbown & Spada, 2000:42 emphasis original). What is the goal in this case? Is it to teach the subject matter or to teach the foreign language?

7.2.5 Knowledge of the foreign language

Through interviews (mainly with students), classroom observations, the reading comprehension task and video recordings I established that the lack of knowledge in the foreign language is another relevant issue in the transition from mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction. As noted above students are required to take their exams in the FL and their knowledge in the language is partial at best. It is argued that insufficient knowledge of the FL affects students' ability to both understand and participate in class. Thus student participation was analyzed as lying at different ends of the continuum (cf figure 7.1) depending on the language used.

Figure 7.1 Student participation continuum



Furthermore, during observations it was discovered that in many instances teachers made initial attempts to teach lessons through the medium of English (the FL) and that they often made an effort to initially ask students questions in this language. This situation was observed in all the classrooms and in every lesson. In general, these attempts were brief given that teachers continually received no response from the learners. In realizing this teachers quickly switched to the mother tongue, Xhosa, to continue teaching the lessons and to ask questions (this will be discussed in more detail in 7.5). Learners, therefore, relied heavily on this language exchange. When asked if they understood what teachers were saying when English only was used some Grade 4 students replied:

“I understand parts, but not the whole thing” (interview: Trima, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

“The teacher tells us the words in Xhosa so that we can understand and it works well” (interview: Siphon, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

Consequently, the use of English results in what could be described as *the Swiss cheese affect*. Here students maintain that when English is used as the medium of instruction they only understand bits and pieces as a result there are holes or gaps in their knowledge.

In addition to the student comments above I observed that the students generally did not pay much attention to the teachers during their initial English explanations and that they only appeared to take notice when the lessons or questions were then repeated in Xhosa. Krashen (1985:18) refers to this situation arguing that “ineffective bilingual programmes use the first language in such a way as to block comprehensible input. This occurs when techniques such as concurrent translations are used...when this is done there is no need [for the students] to ‘negotiate meaning’; the child does not even have to listen to the message in the second language”. Remember for Krashen (1985), Ringbom (1987) and Wong-Fillmore (1991) input and in particular “comprehensible input” is the essential environmental ingredient in additional language learning. An example from my observation notes describes this lack of attention to the initial English explanation:

At first the teacher makes an attempt to explain lessons in English, but quickly switched to Xhosa after realizing that the students were not following the lesson. After the teacher makes this language switch the students begin to take notice of what is being said and their attention is now focused on the teacher (January, 2002).

Similar findings have been noted in the Tanzanian part of the project (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003a, 2003b). Although part of the argument for using English as the medium of instruction is that students will become more proficient in the language, the ‘maximum exposure fallacy’ (cf Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), it is invalid given that students are not even paying attention to the language when it is used in this way (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003a, 2003b).

Finally, the lack of sufficient knowledge of the FL was apparent during the reading comprehension task¹⁷⁴ that I had teachers administer in November 2001. During this lesson some of the teachers were instructed to use English only to teach the lesson (cf chapter 5 for the description of the various methods used) and the students were then subsequently tested in English and required to use English only in writing their answers. After teaching the lessons

¹⁷⁴ This task was given to Grade 4 learners only. However, the ages of the learners range from age 9-15, as a number of learners have either repeated grades or entered the system late. The issue of “over agers”, as teachers refer to them, is difficult both socially and pedagogically.

those teachers that had the English only version (cf appendix C) admitted to me that they found the experience “difficult” and “tiring” (personal communication: Ramela, 28/11/01). In addition, although only one language was used it took longer to teach the lesson than the Xhosa only version, given that teachers had to explain things over and over in an attempt to get the students to understand both what was being taught and what was required of them in answering the questions and filling in the information. The students were informed beforehand that this was not a test that they would receive a grade on for their school transcripts, but that it was part of the research that I was conducting in the school. Moreover, the English only lesson was an artificial situation given that teachers generally make use of Xhosa during lessons to provide information to their students and students were encouraged to just do their best in this situation.

Additionally, in the test I purposefully had four open-ended questions in addition to multiple-choice questions (the usual testing method) in order to get an idea of the students’ ability to use the language in other ways. Below I will highlight some of the results (for more details cf 7.5), which are from both ends of the spectrum, that is, those who scored high and those who scored low on the tests in the English only version. However, those students with a 0 score out of a possible 11 are not included, as many of their answers were incomprehensible and only those scoring at least one correct answer are included in the examples given. The examples of the low end are taken from the number of students scoring between 1 and 1.5. In the examples I present the question in bold with student responses following in italics, and I include answers from both genders. Due to space constraints I will only present results from one school for the low end scores (this school was chosen by placing the school names on a piece of paper and picking one out at random). However, it is important to keep in mind that the results are similar for the all-English teaching and testing in all the schools (the mean scores are presented in 7.4.1.3). In choosing the examples presented here I collected all the tasks in which students scored between 1 and 1.5 and then selected these examples at random. Thus the examples presented here are seen as representative of the examples from other students. Furthermore, I compared these examples with the rest of those in the same range of scores and found these examples similar to the answers provided by other students in the same range of scores. Furthermore, that majority of the students answered all the questions (both multiple-choice and open-ended) and only two students left an open-ended question blank (one student left question number four blank while the other left question number 5 blank).

From SC2 low-end score between 1.0 and 1.5:

Why was Sizi angry with Muddy? *Sizi was very angry* (Boy, age 10, S75).

Why was John angry with Muddy? *Mr. Dakile and two children* (Girl, age 12, S51).

As you can see from the student responses above it appears that the students did not seem to understand the questions being asked as the answers are pieces of text randomly selected from the story. In the first example the student just repeats the question in his attempt to answer whereas in the second example the student picks out a clause from the story that does not fit at all with what is being asked.

For the high end scores I purposefully chose the scripts from SC1 as the highest score received, a score of 10, was received by one student only and it was found in this class. Also four students who scored a 9.0 were from this class. From the four students that scored a 9.0, only two students answered both of these specific open-ended questions correctly and thus I randomly chose one of these two as an example.

From SC1 high-end scores between 9.0 and 10.0:

Why was John angry with Muddy? *The dog chewed he school shoes* (Boy, age 13, S238).

Why was Sizi angry with Muddy? *Muddy lay in Sizis bed and Sizis bed was wet* (Girl, age 10, S243).

It is interesting to note that the above high scoring students still had difficulty in answering these open-ended questions (the average score for this class in the English only version was 4.1). In the first example the student was given full credit as he managed to give the correct information that the dog chewed the school shoes, but with some grammatical errors. Furthermore, the student (age 13) is what the teachers in the schools refer to as “over-agers”, that is, students that have either entered the system late or those that have repeated the Grade (some have repeated more than once). Thus this student should have been in Grade 6 or 7, but was still in Grade 4. For both teachers and these students themselves this is a difficult situation as there are no remedial classes in these schools to help such students. In the second example the learner, who scored 9.0, scored correctly although she too has some grammatical

errors in her answer. Furthermore, although the learner who received the score of 10 his answers to the open-ended questions all displayed similar grammatical mistakes. In addition, I looked through the answers from the students with scores ranging from 7.5 and up (those on the high end of the spectrum). Many of these students did not answer these open-ended questions in their own words, but rather the sentences were taken directly from the story itself, a copying strategy used by the student which, in some instances, was successful and in other instances they simply seemed to pick out text at random. It also appears that those learners who were required to take the test through the medium of English used this copying strategy as their answers were generally direct quotes from the story, while those answering the questions in Xhosa were more inclined to use their own words (cf the next example from students who received the lesson and test in Xhosa).

For the students who received the lesson and the test in Xhosa the results showed a different pattern. From SC3 the examples selected are from a learner with a low-end score (4.0)¹⁷⁵ and a learner with a high-end score (11.0 all correct) where the lesson and subsequent questions were in Xhosa.¹⁷⁶ These examples serve to highlight how learners attempted to use their own words when allowed to express themselves in their mother tongue as opposed to English.

Why was John angry with Muddy? *A lot. This dog has **destroyed/damaged** my shoes he is a lot of trouble. He must go* (Girl, age 12, S230).

What happened when the Dakile family was sleeping? *A burglar arrived at the house Muddy barked heavily* (Girl, age 10, S198).

Although the example from the first learner used some direct quotes from the story (for example, *he is a lot of trouble*) this example shows that she, nevertheless, attempts to use her own words in the Xhosa version. She writes that the dog *must go* as opposed to the words used in the story; *He will have to go*. Additionally, in the story the dog was said to have ruined the shoes, but here she uses the word **damaged/destroyed** (here the word used by the student could mean either damaged or destroyed thus my colleague provided both words in the translation), whereas in the English version learners did not attempt to give alternatives in

¹⁷⁵ In this class there were only two learners with a lower score, a boy with a score of 1.0 and a boy with a score of 3.5. I did not use the example of the lowest score because the teacher in the class revealed that both these students have severe learning difficulties and should really be in a specialized school.

¹⁷⁶ Only the English translation of the questions and answers are provided.

their responses. In the beginning of the sentence the student starts by saying *a lot*, however, it was not clear to my colleague why the student had used this, as it did not make any sense in Xhosa or English. Thus, my colleague left this phrase in when providing the translations as opposed to deleting it. However, in looking at the original script, it appears that the student may have begun to write a sentence and then changed her mind and started a new sentence without erasing the one she originally started. The second example clearly demonstrates how this learner used her own words in answering the question. Furthermore, in answering the other open-ended questions this same learner did not simply take the answers as presented in the text, but instead substituted the possessive pronouns presented in the text with the correct personal pronouns. In the Xhosa version many of the learners, even those with low-end scores, also replaced the possessive pronouns with the correct personal pronouns. An example from this same learner then highlights the following: *It made her floors dirty* rather than the answer given in the English version above by another learner; *This dog makes my floors dirty* (which is taken verbatim from the story). This dog was then replaced by the personal pronoun *it* and the possessive pronoun *my* replaced with the correct personal pronoun *her*. Moreover, this type of substitution was not done by any of the learners in English version.

This illustrates how those students required to use English are more bound by the text while those using the mother tongue are able to express themselves more freely and in their own words. These open responses highlight the difficulty students' face in using the foreign language beyond the typical multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank forms of evaluation generally employed in the schools. This form of evaluation is even criticized by one of the school principals who argues that "our learners are never challenged to use their brains because it is multiple choice, or yes or no" (interview: P1, 01/03/02).

This lack of challenging students was also noted during my observations. In October 2001 I was observing an English lesson in one of the schools. In this lesson the teacher (Zandile) was telling the students, in English, about Table Mountain and in her discussion she told them that there are people who come to visit the mountain and they are called "tourists", she repeats in Xhosa "ikhethshi". Furthermore, Zandile did not ask the students to provide any comments or additional information, rather she focused on specific words that students were required to say over and over. Given that most of the students have some knowledge about Table Mountain this lesson might have been organized as a discussion about what they knew and not about memorizing single words which had little meaning. While observing this lesson I also

recorded my comments and interpretations (in addition to the concrete observations) in my CI notes (cf 5.4 for details on these notes). In my attempt to understand what was happening in this lesson the following excerpt from my fieldnotes emphasizes my initial thoughts:

It appears that the lessons, those supposedly taught in English, do not allow the students the opportunity to really use English in an in-depth and advanced way. The students' ability to develop their English skills is limited to simple phrases and filling in of blanks with no opportunity to truly use the language to express themselves.

In other words, my initial understanding of this lesson was that students were not being given opportunities to use English in a variety of ways; rather their responses were often limited. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the current dominant model in foreign language teaching, argues, however, that the desired outcome of language teaching should enable learners the ability to communicate successfully in the "target language" in real situations (Knight, 2000). In this model the learner is expected to actively interact with both the curriculum materials and with other learners. Furthermore, the teacher is seen more as a facilitator of this interaction and not as a depositor of information. To show the narrow focus of a typical lesson, as discussed in my CI notes above, I present the following from an English subject lesson, which took place in the beginning of October 2001. The teacher, Olwetha, begins the lesson by telling the students to take out their English workbooks (in Xhosa) she then proceeds (in English) by saying that the lesson is about opposites. Continuing on in English she simply says "large-small, rich-poor" then repeating the words in Xhosa. (Nkulu–Ncinci, Isityebi-Ihlwempu). After this the teacher begins to write the following on the board:

1. The sea was very stormy (cold, calm, rough) [*Ulwandle lwaye lunomoya ogqutha kakhulu (obandayo, ozolileyo, ogqutha ngamandla)*]
2. The woman is very beautiful (wealthy, tall, ugly) [*Umfazi mhle kakhulu (usisityebi, mde, mhle)*]
3. Deep (rough, smooth, shallow) [*Nzulu (rwexu, gudile, mdibi)*]
4. Wide (big, round, narrow) [*Phangalele (nkulu, ronte, mxinwa)*]
5. Sweet (dear, bitter, cheap). [*Switi (duru, myuba, tshipu)*]

After writing up the notes Olwetha begins drilling the students. She starts by saying the words, for example, stormy, cold, calm, rough, beautiful, wealthy, etc. and afterwards the students repeat these words in chorus, over and over again. Olwetha also provides the students with the correct answers. Thus she initially asks them in English, "can you tell me the opposite for these words", followed by a rephrasing in Xhosa to provide access to the curriculum (cf 7.4.1), but after a few unsuccessful attempts by the students the teacher

provides all the correct answers and the students repeat the answers in chorus afterwards. After this chorus session, which took roughly one hour, Olwetha asks the students to write up the notes that she has provided on the board (only the English version was on the board the Xhosa translation was only provided orally) in their workbooks and to circle the correct opposite. Again she has given the correct answers beforehand, requiring the students to simply remember what they have spent the last hour memorizing. During this lesson there was no interaction from the students other than initial attempts to provide the one-word answers required in the lesson. Furthermore, there was no elaboration or discussion of these words or how they might be used, for example, in a sentence. The only explanation that was provided was the translation of these words into Xhosa with no further elaboration.

Although the focus in this section is on the students' knowledge of the foreign language it is useful to draw attention to what takes place on the opposite end of the spectrum. Examples from lessons taught in Xhosa show that when the foreign language is not the medium of instruction students are active and the lessons are lively. In January 2002 a Xhosa lesson provides such an example. The following is an excerpt from my observation notes describing a Xhosa lesson where students were required to present a pretend news broadcast.

The teacher had students bring in different newspapers from home and they spend the first few minutes in small groups discussing "*Yinkcazelo enjani ethi siyifumane emaphapheni?*" (what type of information do we get from the news?). The students are put into groups consisting of roughly six. They spend several minutes actively talking about the newspapers they brought in and making a list of what they find. It is interesting to see that the entire discussion is in Xhosa and the words that the students write down are in Xhosa (for example, *inadababa* – news, *imozulu* – weather, *imiphanga* – bereavement, *ezopolitiko* – politics, *ezemidlalo* – sports, *ezolonuabo/unicolo*, *namabali* – music/entertainment news). The teacher then asks the groups to tell her what types of news stories each group came up with. She then writes the Xhosa words on the board. After the groups have presented their list she picks six students in total (one from each group) and has them come up to the front to present a make believe news report. They begin with the first student reading from a script that the members of his group had written down. He is reading the "top story" of the day. The students seemed very interested in this lesson and it appears that the majority of students participated in one way or another...After the news presentation the students appeared upbeat and very excited about the lesson. Some students even mentioned to me that it was "fun", "good", "I like it".

In comparing this lesson with the previous example of the "opposite lesson" that was taught in English we are able to see that the type of English being taught reflects a restricted view of language and that teachers seldom challenge students to use the language in creative or

critical ways as the case was in this “news broadcast lesson”. Thus when the mother tongue of the students is the medium of instruction the lesson becomes interesting and challenging, requiring students to use the language in a variety of ways. On the other hand, lessons that use English as a medium of instruction are often limited to question-and-answer sessions, filling in blanks or multiple-choice. This restricted use of language is believed to limit the ability of the learners to develop the language required for reading content subject textbooks and it does not allow the integration of new information with what they have learned previously (Macdonald, 1990). Moreover, this may send a message that a limited knowledge in the language is only necessary and that critical language awareness is not a requirement in this language. However, the teaching method may have to do with the way in which these teachers themselves have been trained, as the consequences of apartheid most likely played a role in determining what styles of interaction were possible. Macdonald (1990:39) indicates that the apartheid system ensured that most of the teachers in so-called black education did not “speak English with confidence or fluency”, used outdated materials, and had “almost no contact with English speakers”. As a result the teachers own lack of confidence in the language may be reflected back onto the students.

Furthermore, the demands of classroom communication are further complicated in settings such as the ones found in this study because the teacher is attempting to get the students to focus on both the medium (English) and the message (the content subject) simultaneously. This situation draws attention to the different contexts that exist in education in South Africa, in which some students are required to cope with the multiple task of learning the medium and the subject content simultaneously while others are not.

7.2.6 Textbooks and other support materials

Through data collected from observations, interviews and inquiries to schoolbook publishers I determined that a general shortage of learner support materials is a contributing factor in the students’ ability to adjust to the new medium. During the year and seven months I spent in the field I became highly aware of the severe shortage of textbooks and other supplementary

materials. Moreover, an impoverished print environment¹⁷⁷ was clearly evident, with merely a few handmade student posters that were on display in only one of the three schools.

An exception in this regard was found in one school only where the teacher had clearly put a lot of time and effort into making her own posters as she mentioned “there was no money to buy any posters” (interview: Olwetha, 23/11/01). The posters contained numbers, names of animals in Xhosa and then in English and also a poster dealing with Xhosa grammar.

In *all* the classrooms observed (all four classrooms) the general rule was that the teacher was the *only* person with the textbook and often there was only one teacher textbook per grade, so that teachers themselves had to share as well. As a result, teachers spent several hours per day writing up the textbook information¹⁷⁸ on the blackboard, which the students in turn spent another several hours copying down into their workbooks. This constant writing reduced the number of hours the teachers were able to spend actually teaching the lessons that were planned. In addition, this furthermore reduced the actual linguistic input the students received with the focus being more on written skills as opposed to oral skills, which reflects the differences between SLA and FLL, as the FLL classroom setting often places emphasis on written materials in preparation for lessons and exams while in the SLA situation oral skills are essential (Ringbom, 1987).

This input, as previously mentioned, is of the utmost importance since the teacher plays a major role in language learning and the teacher is also the major source of input (Krashen, 1985; Ringbom, 1987; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). Moreover, as Wong-Fillmore (1991) argues, how well teachers function for language learning depends on the adequacy of their methods and materials as well as the kind of language learners hear and practice in such settings, which may vary considerably in its richness and usefulness. Furthermore, Krashen (1985:2) emphasizes that an important variable here is that the setting needs to offer the learners access to meaningful input, and opportunities to practice the language in the context of structured instructional activities, that is, “input is the essential environmental ingredient”. In this type of setting where both teachers and learners spend several hours per day simply writing down and copying information from textbooks the amount of the FL actually used in verbal

¹⁷⁷ This relates to a general lack of textbooks, supplementary learner support materials and other printed materials such as posters, maps, charts, etc.

¹⁷⁸ Some researchers refer to this as giving learners notes (cf Probyn, forthcoming).

communication becomes almost nonexistent. Furthermore, learners do not receive the opportunity to practice the language, as they are busy copying down empty words and facts. As a result, on initial examination by the department, school administration, other researchers or parents it appears that English is the LOLT. The reality is, however, that students simply copy down the sentences and concepts with little or no learning or knowledge acquisition taking place in either the subject nor in the FL. During the interviews with the teachers one teacher described this situation clearly.

“You see the problem is that we don’t have the materials for the learner, that is the biggest problem...they don’t have their own books so it is very difficult. Sometimes the kid can see a thing that you didn’t see if she or he had a book. Now they have to take what I give them because they don’t have the book. Sometimes he or she might point to things that are important to them so you see it is difficult. We don’t even have readers” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

This teacher describes how she is the one who chooses the input and that students have no other option than to use this limited and highly selected input she provides. At the same time this teacher does not recognize that interaction is being missed as she only sees that she is providing the students with notes to make up for the lack of material. During the interview she does not reflect on this lack of interaction, rather she continues on to talk about how she and her colleagues try to make their own materials, but even this becomes difficult when, for example, “the copy machine does not work” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01). Furthermore, the lack of materials also dictates the choice of teaching methods available to teachers with many choosing the transmission approach or “banking” method¹⁷⁹ with a focus on rote learning. The result is teacher-centered with very little initiative or interaction on the part of the learners.

As noted by Avela above, even when teachers want to make their own supplementary materials or use materials they have received from NGOs working with the schools, the infrastructure has a role to play, as another Grade 4 teacher supports Avela’s statement maintaining that “even the photocopy machine sometimes gets broken and you can’t even photocopy worksheets. We need to go to another school to do that” (interview: Zoleka, 28/11/01). The problem is that the other schools in the townships suffer from the same lack of

¹⁷⁹ For Freire (1970) the *banking method* refers to the idea that students are empty vessels to be filled with information similar to making deposits in a bank. Thus the information is to be deposited by the teacher in the same way as one deposits money in a bank. These methods often include rote learning and are teacher-centered as opposed to child-centered.

infrastructure. I recall one afternoon in which I wanted to make copies of a pamphlet for the teachers and their photocopier did not work. The school's secretary telephoned all the other schools in the area and none of the copy machines were in order. The result was that I had to make copies at the University the following day before arriving at the school. However, the schools do not have this option and as a result often do without hand-outs that might have been very useful.

Finally, this lack of infrastructure and materials often results in planned lessons being dropped from the agenda. An example from my observation notes draws attention to such an instance.

In October 2001 a Xhosa reading lesson was planned, but it was dropped from the schedule due to lack of readers for the students and in addition the photocopier was out-of-order. As a result the teacher decided to have the students continue doing mathematics instead, a lesson generally taught in English.

Furthermore, there is not only a lack of materials in these schools, but also the materials they do have are often old and outdated. In one school that was opened in 1994 their mathematics books are from 1993, which means that they have been in use for nine years and they were clearly in need of replacement, not to mention that there were not enough for all the students in even one class. During an interview with Zoleka she pointed out that in her school they "are still using the old Social Studies books, which taught History and Geography as one subject, but in the new Curriculum 2005 History and Geography are to be taught as separate subjects" (interview: Zoleka, 28/01/01). Zoleka points to what she sees as part of the problem which is "the constant reforms and that now we are to teach these subjects separately, but we don't have the books to do this" (interview: Zoleka, 28/01/01), meaning that the books they have require that these subjects (History and Geography) are taught together as one subject and they are therefore outdated. Zoleka adds that due to this lack of up to date materials the teachers are required "to make this correlation" themselves and that "it can sometimes be very difficult" (interview: Zoleka, 28/01/01).

Another issue related to the textbooks is that they can play an important role in constraining language choices. Heugh (Financial Mail, 2001) contends the switch to English is not necessarily what parents want but it is because black teachers and principals believe this is what is expected of them. She also states that "they tend to believe that they're supposed to be teaching earlier in English because there is no support for the mother tongue" (Financial Mail,

2001:33). As one principal noted “there are no books available in the African languages past the Grade 3 level and thus we are forced to make the switch to English in Grade 4” (interview: P2, 01/03/02). This means that schools feel restricted in their choices as a result of pressure by the publishers who only produce books in the African languages for the first three years, for the foundation phase, followed by books in English or Afrikaans only for the intermediate phase. I was able to verify this information by contacting all the major publishers which supply textbooks to the schools.¹⁸⁰ As a result I received several lists of titles available and the only books available in the African languages after Grade 3 are readers, which are then used to teach the languages as a subject along with a few poetry books that were not grade specific. Some publishers sent email lists while others provided me with catalogues sent to the schools and although my search was not exhaustive it did give me some indication to support the claims made by principals and teachers concerning the availability of materials in the African languages. This again draws attention to the power relations that exist, as publishers are able to dictate the language policy in a covert way (cf Brock-Utne, 2000a). In addition, other research has pointed to the issue of textbook publishing and the important role it plays in constraining language choices (Plüddemann et al., 2000; Probyn, forthcoming).

7.3 Dealing with the language transition – focusing on the students

In the previous section I discussed a number of issues that were found to be relevant to the transition from mother tongue to English as the medium. In this section I turn my attention to how this transition is dealt with in the classrooms. In the teaching and learning process the primary role is generally attributed to the teacher. However, what the teacher does is only half of the picture and the other half concerns what the students do to achieve successful learning. In this section how the transition is dealt with by the students, that is, the strategies used by students to facilitate their own learning are discussed, while the strategies used by the teachers will be discussed in the following section (cf 7.4). In managing this transition it was revealed through observations, video recordings and interviews (with both teachers and learners) that learners made use of a number of different coping strategies in order to help the cope with the new medium of instruction. In the analysis of the data, four different strategies have been identified.

¹⁸⁰ The publishers in question are: Longman, Macmillan, Juta, Oxford University Press, and Nasou Via Afrika Publishers.

- Waiting for a mother tongue explanation
- Seeking peer assistance
- Use of the mother tongue
- Guesswork

7.3.1 *Waiting for a mother tongue explanation*

In analyzing the observational data and interviews it became obvious that learners often waited for the teachers to switch languages before attempting to answer questions related to the lesson at hand. *Waiting for a mother tongue explanation* is recognized as one of the most important coping strategies used by students and it was a strategy that the majority of learners used regardless of their cognitive abilities. This strategy used by the students was seen as extremely effective in dealing with the Swiss cheese effect that was the result of the use of the foreign language as a means of communication in the classroom. Ultimately, the use of the mother tongue was successful in providing a solution to the problems learners faced, such as understanding only bits and pieces or not comprehending at all because of the use of the foreign language as a medium of instruction (cf 7.2.5). The following example taken from my observation notes serves to illustrate how students make use of this strategy. In October 2001 I observed the following Natural science lesson where Olwetha was discussing energy and relating it to the sun.

The teacher begins the lesson, about energy, by asking in English: “what is the most important things the sun gives us”? No students raise their hands to answer. She repeats the question one more time in English, but still receives no response. The teacher then switches over to Xhosa to ask the same question: (*Yeyiphi eyona nto ibalulekileyo esithi sifumane elangeni?*) Almost immediately about half of the class raises their hand to answer. It is also apparent that when the teacher asks her question initially in English many of the students don’t seem to be paying much attention. However, I do observe that when she repeats the question in Xhosa many of these same students then take notice of what she is saying and in fact some of them are among those that now raise their hand...More interesting is that after the lesson the teacher tells me that the lesson I just observed was a review of a lesson they had last week. Yet the students are not attempting to answer questions posed in English, but rather they wait until it is repeated in Xhosa.

I noted in my CI notes (notes where I provide my initial analysis) that it seems strange that the students did not even attempt to give an answer to the initial questions posed in English since the lesson was a review, but that they waited instead for the questions to be reinterpreted in

Xhosa before attempting to answer. It might be concluded from this example that students waited for the reformulation of the question in the mother tongue to be sure they understood what was being asked or perhaps this way they were more assured of providing the correct answer.

Furthermore, many teachers recognized the need to use the mother tongue; as one teacher mentioned:

“We are supposed to teach math in English, but we don’t because we know it’s going to be difficult” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Thus waiting for the explanation or questions to be given in the mother tongue seems to give the students more confidence in their ability to answer questions correctly or to realize that they understood the focus of the lesson and the teachers are often willing to provide this reformulation. Another example of this coping strategy was revealed during a Science lesson I observed in February 2002. The excerpt below shows how students wait for the teacher to switch to the mother tongue before responding to the teacher’s question. The lesson is about animals and the teacher begins by telling the students about different kinds of animals using both English and Xhosa. She then asks in English:

“There are different kinds of animals like extinct, endangered, and domestic. Can anyone give me an example of a wild animal”?

The response to the question posed by Avela is met with complete silence and not a single student raised their hand to respond. The teacher then switches to Xhosa and asks the same question.

Kukho iindidi ngendidi zezilwanyana. Umzekelo izilwanyana ezinobungozi, izilwanyaza zasendle kwanezasekhaya. Angakhe omnye wenu andinike umzekelo wesilwanyana sasendle?

Again the response from the students is immediate and about 15 students raise their hand. After the students give their answers, for example, lion, springbok, elephant, etc., Avela goes over the words (in English) extinct, endangered and domestic and has the students repeat these words after her four times. In the end she writes them on the board and then the students

are required to write them in their workbooks (the words are written on the board in English only).

The learners themselves confirmed the observation of this phenomenon during interviews, as one nine-year-old Grade 4 pupil confided, “I can understand a little bit of what is said in English, but then I need that explanation in Xhosa so I can **understand**” (interview: Lusanda, 03/12/01 emphasis original, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani). Other students made similar statements when asked about their understanding when English only was used. It would seem from this statement that the use of English limits the ability of the students to access knowledge and that the mother tongue provides access to the curriculum.

Another student expressed a similar reply when asked if the teacher’s use of Xhosa helps her.

“If we are taught something in English then she [the teacher] is also explaining in Xhosa so that we can also understand. If something is in Xhosa then we can understand” (interview: Zukiswa, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

It is interesting to note that the student quoted above was transferring to a new school (SC4) the following academic year. This transfer of learners from the township schools to former “colored only” or ex- Model C schools (the former “white only” schools) is becoming more common and it was interesting to see how this student would adjust. I sought permission from this learner’s mother (permission was also given by SC4) to follow her daughter’s progress in her new surroundings. In addition SC4, a former “colored only” school, had English only as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 and the teachers were either English mother tongue speakers or Afrikaans mother tongue speakers. Two months into the new 2002 academic year I visited the new school in order to track this learner’s progress. Before proceeding, it is important to mention my observations of this student who we will call Zukiswa (a fictitious name). Zukiswa was what the teacher in her former school (SC3) referred to as a “bright student” with great potential. She was one of those students that others often turned to for assistance. In addition, Zukiswa was one of the students who very often raised her hand to answer questions in class. In SC4 I discovered another side to Zukiswa, as her new teacher¹⁸¹ explains, “Zukiswa is struggling in English reading and most of the other subjects as well

¹⁸¹ After observing Zukiswa I spoke with her new teacher in some detail before leaving the school. The name given to this teacher is a fictitious name as well.

(interview: Melanie, 21/02/02). The following are my own observations that highlight the noticeable difference in this student's ability to participate.

The teacher asks more questions about the story she just read and I noticed that Zukiswa never raised her hand. This is compared to her behavior in her previous school, where she was one of the students who often raised her hand and frequently participated in classroom discussions. In addition, she often answered the teacher's questions during lessons in her old school. However, here in the new school when one question was asked and almost the entire class raised their hand to answer Zukiswa never raised her hand once.

This is very difficult to observe, as I know that Zukiswa was one of the brightest students in her previous class and where her mother tongue was often used for most of the talk time, but now she just sits quietly in the back of the class. The teacher even directly asks her a question where she wants her to repeat something that she has just explained (it was of course all in English) and Zukiswa is unable to answer at all. The teacher even attempted to help her by giving her most of the answer, but Zukiswa fails to answer. I also noticed Zukiswa's friend who sits behind her is trying to give her the answer.

Here a student who was previously described as bright and full of potential is now seen as passive and unable to participate. In addition this student herself admitted that she needed the teacher to explain the lessons in Xhosa (her mother tongue) in order to understand. Here other possible explanations for Zukiswa's behavior can of course be that she is shy in her new surroundings, but as she mentioned during an interview with her she "has many friends that were already enrolled in the school" (interview: Zukiswa, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani) and my observations and subsequent follow up shows that a number of these friends were in her new class. Furthermore, it is important to note that although the medium of instruction in the school is English, the majority of the students are Xhosa speakers, which I believe helped Zukiswa adjust socially to the new environment. The principal of the school mentioned the change in the student population. During an interview with him he noted that although the school was originally defined as a "colored school" the demographics have changed over the years with the majority of learners now coming from the Xhosa-speaking townships of Khayelitsha and Crossroads. Ultimately for Zukiswa and other students like her we need to keep in mind the frustration they must face of being in class where the language becomes a barrier to learning and how this case may help us to also understand this issue in other contexts. Certainly Zukiswa may have been affected, to some degree, by the new surroundings and the new teacher which might have had an influence on her behavior, but certainly the language barrier cannot be ignored.

The overall point to be considered here is that the coping strategy known as *waiting for a mother tongue explanation* is seen as important by this student as well as others in providing them access to the curriculum, something the FL fails to accomplish.

7.3.2 *Seeking peer assistance*

Seeking peer assistance was observed as another coping strategy often utilized by students. However, those students who were often less successful than others in the classroom appeared to employ this strategy more often than those who were generally the source of the assistance. Those students who were often described by their teachers as “bright students” then served as sources of information for other students. This is also similar to the peer interpreting strategy noted by Plüddemann et al. (2000). However, in their investigation they were using this term in the context of multilingual classrooms whereas I refer to this strategy in a context that is linguistically homogenous as opposed to multilingual. During my analysis of the observation data through the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) I discovered that Zukiswa, the student described above, who often served as a source of information for other students in SC3 was seeking peer assistance herself in SC4 (her new English only medium school). As a result of looking for alternative cases (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) it was shown that when a student was put in a situation where the language used in the classroom became a barrier to knowledge this learner also made use of this coping strategy in order to access knowledge. When Zukiswa was asked what she would do when she doesn’t understand the teacher in her new school she replied:

“I have a friend that goes to that school and she speaks Xhosa and I will just ask her to explain if I don’t understand” (interview: Zukiswa, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

This learner is then hoping to rely on other students who may be more proficient in English than she is to assist her and to translate. However, we may question the appropriateness of requiring other students to assist in this way. Crawford (1999) discusses the issue of translation and provides an excellent example of the problems with this practice between adults, let alone children. In her article she explains the difficulty that even educated adults have in making correct translations (involving Xhosa to English) between doctors and

patients, often these translators are educated Xhosa speaking nurses. Undoubtedly the practice of using peers to translate in the classroom should, at the very least, be questioned. Furthermore, Zukiswa is still in the position that when she leaves school she goes home to a mainly Xhosa-speaking environment in which English is considered a foreign language, an environment that does not provide additional support for learning or practicing the language.

Thus for the learners in the classrooms the use of this strategy appeared to serve a dual purpose. One reason was to overcome language difficulty and for some it was more general learning ability. That is to say, this strategy appeared to be utilized more often during lessons in which the teacher made less use of the code-switching strategy and thus learners had to seek other alternatives to access the curriculum. In some instances where the *peer assistance strategy* was employed it was not always effective in that those whom students sought assistance from were sometimes confused themselves or misunderstood what was expected of them. The result is that when learners chose to make use of the peer assistance strategy the outcome was not always successful. An example of the use of this strategy is found in a mathematics lesson in which the teacher used only English to teach the lesson. Furthermore, in the use of this strategy some learners chose assistance from peers who were also somewhat confused and thus the use of this strategy was not very effective. During a mathematics lesson I observed in the end of October 2001 (involving fractions) Thembisa begins the lesson by drawing different shapes on the board and dividing them up equally and unequally, by drawing lines in them. She then begins explaining the idea of fractions to the students, in English only.

T: You see I am dividing these shapes into equal parts (pointing to only those that were divided equally). Do you understand?

Ss: Yes miss (in chorus).

T: Now I am giving you a handout and you will need to discuss it and tell me which shape is divided into three equal parts. You can discuss it first in groups. Do you understand?

Ss: Yes miss (in chorus).

After receiving the handout (cf appendix E) the students begin to discuss in their groups and during the discussion the students use Xhosa only. After a few minutes Thembisa begins asking the students, again in English only, which of the shapes is divided into three equal

parts, that is, which one of the shapes has $\frac{1}{3}$ of it shaded. After two students answer incorrectly a third student finally gets the correct answer, but this student simply chose the remaining example as there were only three possibilities. Also the students in this lesson did not volunteer their answers, but were called upon by the teacher to provide an answer. Thembisa then tells the students to “take out a piece of paper and fold it into three equal parts. After you are finished you are to draw a shape in your workbooks and divide it into **three** equal parts” (emphasis original). The students begin folding their papers and speaking to each other in Xhosa. The following description is from my observation notes and it describes the remainder of the lesson.

I begin to walk around the room to see how the students are progressing with the folding exercise. It looks as though a number of students were not sure what they were supposed to do...After the folding exercise the students were also supposed to draw a shape in their books and divide it into three equal parts. It appears that a number of the students did not understand the lesson (that was explained in English only) and are somewhat confused. After some time some of these students begin to look at the work of other students to get a clue from them. However, even some of the students that they have copied from (both the folding and shading exercise) did not correctly understand the lesson either. Also many of the students were dividing (and shading) and folding into two, four and five parts instead of three.

Although this peer assistance strategy was sometimes successful there were other instances, like the one described here, where it was not successful and learners were then left to look for other alternatives to achieve successful results (cf 7.3.4).

7.3.3 Use of the mother tongue

Although the use of the mother tongue in the form of code switching is a coping strategy often used by the teachers (cf 7.4.1.1), students were observed using this strategy in their own way. During a combined English and History lesson I observed in October 2001, students initiated the use of Xhosa in response to a number of questions posed by their teacher, Zandile, in English. The following excerpt from my observation notes demonstrates how students initiated this language switch.

In the lesson the teacher begins by talking about the past “olden times” and then she talks about the “modern days” and the types of communication that are available to us now, for example, TV, computers, newspapers, magazines, radio, and fax. Then she gives examples of communication during the “olden days”, for example, letters,

telephone, and even a train – as a form of communication and getting from point A to point B. All this is being done in English as the lesson is an English and history lesson combined. Then the teacher begins to talk about the news as a form of communication. She then asks for examples of the type of information available from the news.

- T: What do we get from the news?
S1: *Imo yezulu* (weather)
T: What else?
S2: *Iingozi* (accidents)
S3: Rapists
S4: *Abusela / Abaphangi* (Thieves/Robbers)
T: Anything else?
S5: *Abaqweqwedisi* (Hijackers)
S6: *Ezopolitiko* (Politics)
S7: *Uhlukubezo* (abuse)
T: And what else do we get?
S8: *Ulwazi oluphandaleleyo ngengculaza* (Aids awareness)
S9: *Iziyobisi* (drug dealers)
S10: *Imidlalo* (Sports)

Although Zandile asked the question in English the students provided their responses in Xhosa. Furthermore, Zandile continues her prompting in English and still the students provide answers in Xhosa. Zandile did not insist that students gave their answers in English allowing them to use their mother tongue instead. However, each time a student provided an answer she wrote the English translation up on the board instead.

In most instances this type of code-switching was generally only done after the teacher indicated, in one way or another, that the mother tongue could be used often resulting in increased responses from the students. While some teachers indicated this acceptance through silent means, as Zandile did in the above example, others specifically told students that they could answer in the mother tongue. The authority of the teacher here to set the agenda and the power to control and evaluate the speech of the pupils has traditionally defined the teacher and the work of teaching. However, there are those that question this traditional understanding of teachers and teaching suggesting that this view is no longer appropriate in today's learning environments (van Lier, 1988). Attention is drawn to the power relations at work in the classroom as it is usually the teacher who decides when Xhosa is used or not. Often students are not given an opportunity to challenge this or to choose the language that they respond in and if there is a choice this generally only takes place after teachers indicate that it is allowed. When this is the case learners commonly make use of this strategy in an attempt to participate in the lesson and in doing so they are able to cope, to some degree, with this FL as a medium.

There are, on the other hand, a few exceptions to this rule where the learners themselves took the initiative to give the answers in Xhosa, like in the situation mentioned above. When this was the case the teacher then normally repeated the answer, if correct, in English (or as the example above shows wrote the translation up on the board) and as a result reinforcing her power over who decides on the language used. However, this translation of the learner's answer into English may also be viewed as an attempt by the teacher to simultaneously provide access to English.

Other instances where learners made use of the mother tongue were during group work sessions. In this case permission was not sought nor did the teacher explicitly give it. It was observed that during *all* group work activities the only language used was Xhosa and in this way learners were dealing with the FL by discussing the lesson and activities in their own language. Although students did not code-switch during these group work activities there were some occasions where the concept word was used in English (code-mixing) during the student discussions, as these words were the focus of the lesson. By discussing with peers in their own language students were able to assist each other in gaining access to the curriculum, which was often not possible through the use of the FL.

The result is that the use of the mother tongue not only provides access to the curriculum, but it also allows increased and varied participation by the students. Moreover, its use becomes a viable means for learners to explore their ideas.

7.3.4 *Guesswork*

Guesswork was observed as one of the least effective strategies employed by learners and it was generally only used as a last resort, when other strategies were either not available or ineffective. It was observed on a number of occasions that when teachers failed to recognize that the learners were not following and thus continued to explain lessons in English only or mainly in this foreign medium, learners were often uncertain as to what was expected of them. As a result they simply made a guess as to what they should do and in doing so they often sought visual clues. One instance involved in the guesswork strategy is noted from the mathematics lesson described in 7.3.2, where Thembisa was conducting a lesson involving fractions. Although the strategy used by some of the students was that of *seeking peer*

assistance a number of students employed guesswork instead. My observation notes describe the following.

The teacher instructs the students to take a piece of paper and to fold it into three equal parts (she did not demonstrate this but rather gave the students instruction in English only). This entire explanation was given in English only (this is a math lesson involving fractions). Originally the teacher had demonstrated this lesson on the board drawing different shapes and dividing them into equal and unequal parts. The majority of the explanation took place in English rather than Xhosa. After her explanation students are required to perform this same task. The task consists of first folding a piece of paper into three equal parts and then, working with a handout they received, they are instructed to divide different figures into equal parts (i.e. 7 parts and 8 parts) and then to shade a certain amount of the divided areas (i.e. one seventh and one eighth) followed by drawing a shape in their workbooks and dividing it into three equal parts.

I begin to walk around the room to see how students are progressing with the exercise...It quickly becomes obvious that many of the students do not understand what was expected of them...Many are not able to fold their piece of paper into three equal parts and instead they fold it into unequal parts or into more than three parts. In working on the handout many students appear confused and many just copy exactly what the teacher had previously written on the board, both the equally and unequally divided shapes.

This excerpt from my observation notes demonstrates the attempt by students to cope with the fact that their knowledge of what was expected of them was limited due to the use of the foreign medium only as a means of communication between the teacher and the learners. Equally this example shows that the use of this coping strategy does not always guarantee a successful outcome, one of correctly performing the task. In walking around the room my observations revealed that many of the learners were incorrect in their guesswork and as a result failed to fold the piece of paper into three equal parts, instead folding it into four and five parts, while others did not divide the shapes in their workbooks correctly. In looking at their workbooks I noticed that about nine students had not managed to divide the shape equally and instead relied on what the teacher had written on the board in the beginning of the lesson, the shape with the unequal division. Thus for these students the use of the guesswork strategy was ineffective.

As revealed by the example above, the insistence by this particular teacher in using the foreign medium as a means of communication produced a situation where some learners were restricted access to the curriculum, as many students were unable to correctly complete the

task at hand. The result is that many of the learners in this classroom were unable to participate in this lesson and thus left behind.

7.4 How teachers cope in teaching through a foreign language

There appears to be general agreement that students learn better when they understand what the teacher is saying (Klaus, 2001:1).

It has always been felt by African educationists that the African child's major learning problem is linguistic. Instruction is given in a language that is not normally used in his [or her] immediate environment, a language which neither the learner nor the teacher understands and uses well enough (Obanya, 1980:88).

In connection to the above quotes Brock-Utne (2003c) further argues that the situation in most classrooms in Africa is that students do *not* understand what the teacher is saying. She argues that this is particularly true “if the teacher follows the official policy s/he is supposed to follow, namely to teach through a foreign language *only*, a language children do not use outside of school, have little exposure to and are not familiar with” (Brock-Utne, 2003c:1). Additionally, most teachers themselves do *not* use this language outside of the classroom setting and as a result their own exposure to the language is limited.

In the case of South Africa many teachers are faced with this same dilemma. Do they follow the “official” policy and teach *only* through the foreign language or do they employ coping strategies in order to deal with the mismatch between the home and community language on the one hand and the school language on the other? In this investigation I attempt to find out how teachers cope with teaching through a foreign language, a language which neither they nor their pupils use outside of the classroom. Through the analysis of the data which included observations, video recordings (both the reading comprehension task lesson and other typical classroom lessons), and interviews it became evident that teachers make use of a number of coping strategies in order to deal with this mismatch and facilitate learning.

These strategies are identified as:

1. Code alternation
2. Methods that reflect a banking concept of education

7.4.1 Code alternation

The research on code alternation in bilingual classrooms spans roughly two decades (cf Martin-Jones, 1995 for a review). The research has been both cross-disciplinary and includes a variety of bilingual and multilingual settings. Martin-Jones (1995:90) draws attention to code-switching and relates it to the central issue of concern in this investigation:

Most research has been undertaken in settings where there is an ongoing debate about language education policy: in situations where a new form of language education programme has been implemented or where there has been a change in the medium of instruction or, in contrast, in situations where a change in medium needs to be considered because current policies are inappropriate. The principal motivation in undertaking most classroom-based research seems to have been to establish how language education policies are being translated into communicative practice in the day-to-day cycles of classroom life.

Martin-Jones draws attention to the motivation in looking at code alternation in the context of this investigation, that is, what is happening in the classrooms with regard to the implementation of the LiEP and the need to look at the functions of code alternation in this context.

In an attempt to investigate the question of how teachers deal with teaching through a foreign language I use a combination of observation data (including video recordings), teacher interviews and interviews with teacher trainers as well as other informants. As a result of the analysis of this data it was discovered that teachers utilized one particular strategy more often than any other. This strategy, known as *code alternation*, involves the use of an alternative language to various degrees. These different uses of code alternation are known as *code-switching*, *code-mixing*, and *full translations* (cf 4.4.3 for working definitions of code-switching and code-mixing). Given that this code alternation involves the use of three distinctive types of language modification, each will be dealt with separately.

7.4.1.1 Code-switching

Before discussing this issue in the context of this study it is important to note, once again, the definition of code-switching used in this study: **Code-switching** refers to a switch in language that takes place *between* sentences, also called an *intersentential* change. Thus in the

classrooms in this investigation one language is being used as a medium of instruction (English), but the learners' mother tongue is a different language (Xhosa), in this case the teachers may sometimes code-switch to the learners' mother tongue if they consider it necessary. Lin (1996, 2000) argues, for example, that code-switching is a reasonable response by a teacher to the specific kind of teaching and learning situation.

...by always starting in the L1, Teacher D always starts from where the student is – from what the student can fully understand and is familiar with (Lin, 2000:282).

While other researchers have concluded that the code-switching as a teaching strategy is of questionable value, particularly if one of the aims of the teaching is to improve students' competence in English (cf review by Martin-Jones, 1995).

As previously mentioned (cf 4.4.3) Ferguson (2002) describes the practice of code-switching as a pragmatic coping strategy used by teachers in situations where pupils have limited proficiency in the official language medium. Teachers who are knowledgeable in the primary language of students often make considerable use of this coping strategy. Other researchers have argued that given the fact that English is the target language in South African schools, and in support of the new principles of Curriculum 2005, code alternation practices are “not only inevitable but also necessary in schools where English is being learned at the same time as it is being used as the LOLT” (Setati, et al., 2002:76-77). Furthermore, Ferguson (2002) argues that this strategy is neglected or marginalized in teacher education.

In this investigation I sought to find out if in fact this coping strategy is dealt with in teacher education. After speaking with eight different teacher trainers (the subjects these teacher-trainers worked with were history, language literacy and communication, science and mathematics) at the Universities and Technikons in the Western Cape Province I discovered that Ferguson's claim holds true. None of those informants I spoke with dealt with the issue to any degree. Furthermore, the practice is recognized as taking place, particularly in African language classrooms, but its use as a possible effective teaching strategy is not acknowledged (cf review by Ferguson 2002; Lin, 1996, 2000). In particular, the work of Lin (1996, 2000) and Setati et al. (2002) suggests the possibilities of using this strategy along with other strategies to facilitate teaching and learning.

Given the silence surrounding this strategy, at least in teacher training the use of this strategy can be seen as a covert policy as opposed to an overt policy. This was evident from the previous example provided concerning the use of the guesswork strategy. Here the teacher attempted to follow the school's policy of English as a medium of instruction after Grade 3 and the result was that a number of students were unable to perform the task at hand. Interestingly enough, I found when researching into the history surrounding language policy in South Africa that the use of this strategy was acknowledged as early as 1905 when Lord Selborne proclaimed: "Teachers shall be allowed to use either English or the Dutch language as the medium of instruction as long as they make themselves understood to the children" (Malherbe, 1977:5), and although this statement was directed towards teaching white Dutch-speaking children, the practice was still acknowledged. In his statement Selborne emphasized the motivation for the use of this strategy that holds even today as teachers are attempting to "make themselves understood to the children". However, in teacher education today the issue is not even mentioned in teacher training classrooms and only those very few highly informed language activists just briefly mention it. In discussing the issue with Zubeida Desai, from the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape and a language activist, she commented that she does not really take up the issue in her teacher training classes and if it is mentioned "I just briefly touch upon it, but I do not go into any detail" (personal communication April 2003). Thus many teachers may not be fully aware of the functions and possibilities of this strategy (cf Chick & McKay, 2001), resulting in the use of this strategy, at times, in an ad hoc and often disorganized fashion. In their research involving five schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal Chick and McKay (2001) argued that code-switching into Zulu was only generally permitted in non-prominent domains such as the playground and the use of the language in class was highly discouraged. Furthermore, they argue that in these schools an additive approach was not being pursued as Zulu speakers were not being encouraged to gain anything more than a rudimentary level of proficiency in the language.

Other research suggests that teachers may be ambivalent towards the use of this strategy and thus make little use of the practice and equally these teachers may not encourage their learners to make use of their mother tongue (Setati et al., 2002). Although the research by Chick and McKay (2001) and Setati et al. (2002) suggests that there are teachers who do not make use of code-switching, my own investigation reveals that all the teachers involved in my study did make use of the strategy to some extent.

At the classroom level it became evident that all the teachers observed in this investigation made use of code-switching to some degree (it was observed that all the teachers used this strategy at one time or another). In determining the function of this strategy some general patterns appeared to be evident. These patterns revealed that the use of code-switching served a variety of different functions.

1. **Provide access** – concepts are clarified in order to make lessons more accessible to learners.
2. **Classroom management** – task instruction is clarified so that learners will understand what is expected and to indicate a move to the next phase of the lesson. Additionally, management can refer to discipline and general classroom administration.
3. **Elicit student response** – used to encourage pupil participation and response.
4. **Interpersonal communication** – individual learners’ attention was sought and there was a focus on individual assistance.

Table 7.4: Frequency of code-switching functions:

Provide access	50%
Classroom management	19%
Elicit student response	20%
Interpersonal communication	11%

(Source: fieldnotes)

These various functions of code-switching reflect many of the same functions described by other researchers (cf Ferguson, 2002 for an overview) and although the amount of code switching used varied among teachers, the overall pattern was the same. The overall majority of code-switching used in the classrooms was employed to provide learners access to the curriculum as noted in table 7.4 followed by the use of this strategy to elicit student responses and classroom management. Finally, the use of code-switching as a form of interpersonal communication was the least used function. In their use of code-switching teachers were often able to engage a wider spectrum of learners, regardless of pupils’ proficiency in the official medium, thus allowing all learners access to the curriculum. Before turning my attention to the actual examples of how these different functions of code-switching work in the classroom I would like to draw attention to some of the recent research in South Africa concerning the use of this strategy in schools.

Other research in South Africa has highlighted the use of code-switching as a major coping strategy (cf Adendorff, 1993; Slabbert & Finlayson, 1999; Moyo, 2000; Setati et al., 2002; Probyn, forthcoming). Despite the varying consensus on the effectiveness of this strategy I argue that it should not be overlooked in research and that by understanding its use in classrooms we can better assess its worth. However, there is evidence suggesting that multilingual schools in South Africa show little tolerance for this practice (Chick & McKay, 2001) with arguments that in these schools there is a close fit between the intended policy and the enacted policy (Probyn, forthcoming). Thus Probyn (forthcoming) argues that the intended policy of English only in the schools in her study is upheld as teachers in these schools generally teach in English only. In their research, located in KwaZulu-Natal, Chick and McKay (2001) discovered that in the schools in their study, which were mainly multilingual schools, there was very little support for the use of languages other than English, the official medium. This was despite the fact that approximately 80% of people in the province have Zulu as a first language. In contrast, this investigation shows that this strategy is a highly utilized teaching tool in township schools and it is widely accepted by teachers, school administrators, and the Department of Education. As one Department official noted:

“Across the spectrum in our black schools while the medium of instruction of subjects is English, teachers interact with learners in Xhosa. What they do is they then summarize the lesson into English...Yet, the entire discourse and conversation within a classroom is in Xhosa, is in the **mother tongue**, but when it comes to the examination, when it comes to the notes, when it comes to the studying it’s all done in English” (interview: Department of Education official, 26/02/02 emphasis original).

Although the statement above is not completely correct, as teachers do not simply summarize the lesson into English, rather it is more of an ad hoc situation as English and Xhosa are used as needed to get the information across to the students. What this statement does confirm is that the practice of code-switching is both recognized and accepted at the department level, but that the way this is conducted in reality would perhaps be questioned.

In looking at the practice of code-switching in the classroom, the following example draws attention to the use of both English and Xhosa that were observed at the Grade 4 level for this study. During a mathematics lesson I observed, in November 2001, the following language situation where the teacher (Zandile) was explaining to the students (20+19), which she had written on the board. At first Zandile made an attempt to explain the lesson in English, but

quickly switched to Xhosa after realizing that the students were not following. During the explanation of this mathematics lesson she proceeded as follows:

T: We are now going to do the addition together and I will explain and you will follow along. We are breaking up the numbers. Do you understand?

Ss: (Silence, no one responds).

T: *Siyacalula ngoku, siyawaqhekeza la manani. Sithatha bani phaya* (We are simplifying now, we are breaking these numbers. What do we take from there)?

S1: Utwo (two).

T: *Sithathe bani phaya* (And what do we take from there)?

S1: *Uone* (One).

T: *Utwo ujika abe ngubani* (Two changes into what number)?

S2: *Abe ngu-twenty* (Becomes twenty).

T: Right, *u-one lo ujika abe ngubani* (Right, this one becomes what)?

S3: *Abe ngu-ten* (Becomes ten).

This example of a typical lesson shows how an entire lesson was carried out in Xhosa except for the initial attempt to use English only and it illustrates how the lesson remains in Xhosa (something that happens rather often in the classrooms observed). Zandile thus switched languages after receiving no response from the students when she initially used the FL only. As a result this teacher was **providing access** to the curriculum, which she recognized as unattainable through the use of English only. Furthermore, the remainder of the mathematics lesson continued on in Xhosa with only some minor code-mixing taking place, for example, “right”, “okay”, “understand” and so on, which was followed by Xhosa to strengthen the previous and, to some extent, artificial English word “right”. In addition, the book the teacher was working from was in English, which the teacher depended on heavily. The example of the mathematics lesson described above is not an isolated case and in fact many of the lessons observed during the fieldwork were conducted mainly through the medium of Xhosa. However, at the end of the day students are expected to use English for all the writing that is done in the subjects, except for the subject Xhosa, as well as for examination purposes. Furthermore, it may be argued that Xhosa becomes only an oral language as opposed to English which is both oral and written, thus strengthening the status of English. The result is that when teachers see that their students do not understand because they are using a language that is unfamiliar (even foreign) to the students, they make use of the code-switching strategy. Other researchers have reported this phenomenon in classrooms in other countries (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003a, 2003b; Lin, 1996, 2000; Myers-Scotton 1993; Ndayipfukamiye 1993; Saville-Troike 1982; also cf Ferguson, 2002 for a review of research in other countries).

Other forms of code-switching involve the function of **classroom management**, for example, teachers switching from teaching a lesson mainly in English to clarifying task instruction (moving to the next stage of the lesson) in Xhosa. An example of this type of code-switching is highlighted below. First the teacher begins by explaining the lesson briefly in English and then she switches to Xhosa to communicate to the learners what they will be required to do after she has gone through the vocabulary words.

T: *Uza kuwasika la maphepha kancinci, uwa-paste(e) encwadini yakho, wakugqiba uwabhale la magama...but phambi kokuba senze loo nto leyo kufuneka siwafundile ukuba athini na kuqala, la aza kwenza ipuzzle yethu.* (You are going to cut these papers into small pieces, you paste them on your book, when you finish you write these words... but before we do that we must read them to get what they mean first, those that are going to make our puzzle).

Here the teacher emphasizes to her pupils the objective of the exercise that will follow and in communicating this information she chooses to use the mother tongue thus ensuring that the learners will understand the point of the exercise.

Code-switching has also been observed as serving the function of **eliciting the response of learners** when the use of English only to ask questions fails. Here teachers often recognize that the non-response of learners requires that the question be reformulated in their mother tongue ensuring almost immediate student response in the new code. My observation notes, from early October, clearly describe how Thembisa uses this function of code-switching during a mathematics lesson:

The teacher is giving the students a mathematics equation to answer. She begins by asking them, in English, “What is $(15 \div 3)$ ” and then she says “15 sweets to give 3 students the same amount”. The students do not respond at all at which time the teacher then repeats the same question in Xhosa and immediately 10 students raise their hands to answer. A little later the teacher asks another mathematical question “what is $(16 \div 2)$ ” and again no response from the students. The teacher switches again to Xhosa to ask the students and again the response is immediate.

Also this function of code-switching was obvious during the reading comprehension task that the teachers gave the students in November 2001. Here the teacher is asking the learners to look at the picture and to describe what they see before she begins reading the story. In her questioning the following shows how code-switching functions to **elicit learner response**.

T: What is the dog doing?
Ss: silence
T: *Yenz ntoniinja?* (What is the dog doing?)
S1: The dog is eating the clothes.
S2: The dog is eating the man.

In this example the teacher is trying to engage her pupils and in doing so switches from asking the question in English, which resulted in no response by the students, to asking it in Xhosa (cf 7.2.5 and figure 7.1). The second attempt to ask the question in the mother tongue resulted in a number of responses from the students (although the transcription shows two verbal responses the number of students raising their hand was 10). It was obvious from the responses the learners did not quite know how to express in English what they saw in the picture, which was that the dog was biting the man. Furthermore, as we see the response from the students was given in English and not in Xhosa, which might signal that the students knew the teacher wanted their answers in English. Although the answers given by the students were not completely correct, the use of this strategy in eliciting learner response was highly effective in its intention.

Finally, another purpose of code-switching serves the function of **interpersonal communication** between teachers and pupils. Here switching from English to Xhosa served to gain the attention of individual learners and to give individual assistance to learners, which was on the whole never conducted in English. During an English reading lesson the following observation was made.

The teacher reminds the students “*this is an individual exercise and not group work and you need to look at your own paper*”. She then switches to using Xhosa to assist a particular student who is having difficulty with this exercise.

Here there is a switch from the use of English emphasizing at the collective level that the exercise is not group work followed by an explanation of the lesson in Xhosa to an individual student, demonstrating how this code-switching functions for interpersonal communication. Here Xhosa is seen as more appropriate for individual interaction as opposed to English, which would seem artificial given that both the learner and teacher speak Xhosa as a mother tongue and not English. Moreover, if the focus of individual attention is generally to assist students who are having difficulty with the lesson, using English as opposed to Xhosa would not be as effective or perhaps even appropriate.

During the continuous comparative analysis method emphasized in Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) I also attempted to look for alternative or negative cases of this strategy and in doing so an interesting phenomenon emerged. Of all the lessons and teachers observed, one teacher made the least amount of use of this code-switching strategy. Through this comparative analysis it became evident that this teacher used more English for instruction (to give instruction) and to provide access to the curriculum (to clarify content). As a result in many instances the learners either became confused or misunderstood the lesson. Consequently, many learners reverted to using coping strategies other than *waiting for a mother tongue explanation*, making use of *peer assistance* or *guess work* instead, which in many cases were less effective strategies than *waiting for a mother tongue explanation*. As a result the teacher in this case in point often discovered that the students were not carrying out the class-work correctly. In turn this teacher attempted to re-explain the lesson and give instructions and often continued to use English, with only occasional instances where the mother tongue was used in this reinterpretation. The result was that time was lost and/or wasted and in other instances this teacher did not even realize that the students misunderstood and thus the lesson was not reinterpreted. The result was that students failed to correctly complete the task at hand.

This teacher also took part in the reading comprehension task given to the learners. She was one of the two teachers that taught the lesson using the code-switching method (where both English and Xhosa were used as medium of instruction). The results from her class, in SC3, showed an average score of 4.8 compared to the average score of 6.5 in SC2 (cf 7.4.1.3 for the full results). During the analysis of the videotape from the lessons involving these two teachers it was discovered that the teacher in SC3 made considerably less use of the learners' mother tongue in comparison to the teacher in SC2 who made extensive use of Xhosa in addition to English and where the average score was 6.5. This serves to demonstrate that the mother tongue may help to facilitate a better understanding of the lesson and that when the teacher makes use of the learners' mother tongue access to the curriculum is improved.

In the townships the use of the mother tongue is not only recognized, but also valued as a tool to assist both learners and teachers alike. Moyo (2000) describes the use of Zulu, English, and Afrikaans in several communities in the KwaZulu-Natal province. His study shows that the use of Zulu in public domains of the black townships has actually increased and that in these communities English and Afrikaans are hardly used. As one teacher in my study contends:

“I used to do that [teach first in English only with some Xhosa explanation] but they look like zombies. Just one sentence in English they just look at you. They don’t understand a word because at home nobody is using the language. They only hear it here” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Moreover, teachers acknowledge that they need to use Xhosa even in grades 5-7 because if they were to use only English as one teacher admitted to me “students would look at me like I am crazy” (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/91). Here the teacher is referring to the fact that students even in grade 7 require Xhosa in order to grasp the concepts being taught.

7.4.1.2 Code-mixing

As previously argued (cf 4.4.3) code-mixing is generally looked at more negatively than code-switching. This type of language alternation often indicates a lack of language competence in the language concerned (this lack of competence could involve one or both languages as noted by Romaine, 1995), whereas code-switching does not necessarily indicate a deficiency on the part of the speaker. On the other hand, Poplack (1980) suggests that fluent bilinguals tend to code-switch within sentences (what we refer to in our project as code-mixing or intrasentential change) whereas non-fluent bilinguals favor switching between sentences (intersentential change). Romaine (1995) does point out, however, that given the problem of terminology, in that the terms code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing are not being used by all researchers in the same way, makes comparison across studies difficult. My focus here is not to determine whether code-mixing is performed by fluent or non-fluent bilingual teachers, rather my intention is simply to show how code-mixing functions in the classroom as a coping strategy. Hence, in this study code-mixing refers to a switch in language that takes place *within* the same sentence also called an *intrasentential* change.

For Brock-Utne (2003b, 2003c) code-switching is used even by a teacher with good command of English (if that is the medium of instruction) when s/he sees that students do not comprehend. The many examples referred to above serve to illustrate this point. However, during classroom observations the practice of what Brock-Utne and I refer to as code-mixing (cf 4.4.3 also Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003b) was also noted. In a paper presented by Brock-Utne (2003c:4) she argues that it appears that the strategy of code-mixing is mostly “being used by teachers who are not language teachers and do not have a good command of the language of instruction”. My investigation shows that only one of the teachers involved in

the study was actually a language teacher. Likewise, during interviews many of the teachers confided that their command of English, the official medium of instruction, was inadequate. In the interviews seven of the eight teachers commented that they had difficulty with English (four of the teachers made reference to the language as foreign and, therefore, they had difficulty while the other three mentioned difficulty with the language in more general terms). As a lecturer of English at the University of Dar es Salaam Martha Qorro (2002) argues for the elimination of incorrect English by *not* using it as a medium of instruction and although she agrees that learning English is important, the best way to achieve this she argues is through the improved teaching of English as a subject with teachers who specialize in the language. In this way English could be taught using methods that may reduce this type of ad hoc code-mixing that takes place in classrooms where words are mixed in here and there with no apparent rationale.

In general, teachers used code-mixing to a lesser degree than code-switching and they appeared to draw on this strategy when they were unable to easily recall the correct Xhosa word from their memory. Thus code-mixing an English word into a Xhosa based sentence helps fill a temporary gap in memory. An example of this is presented below.

T: *Yathiniinja? He ruined ezikabani izihlangu?* (What did the dog do? Whose shoes did he ruin?)

T: **Then uSizi also wayengayifuniinja because kwenzeka ntoni?** (Then, Sizi also did not like the dog because what happened?).

Here it is evident that when speaking to the class the English words (these are in bold) mixed into the Xhosa sentence show the inability of the teacher to recall from her memory the correct words in Xhosa and thus she makes use of the English words. Historically code-mixing among speakers of African languages, particularly in urban areas, has been recognized as a common occurrence (cf Buthelezi, 1995; McCormick, 1995). In referring to the teaching of African languages in schools the following quote draws attention to this practice.

The teacher is required to fight a constant battle in maintaining the norms of the language he [*sic*] teaches. It is only in the rural and homogenous areas where cross-cultural influences and interference of other ethnically related or unrelated languages are either absent or minimal. But in the larger densely populated urban centres, the mixing of the languages is so pronounced that it is not unusual for young people, in particular, to use words and expressions from another language deliberately when conversing among themselves (Gugushe, 1978:215).

Thus Gugushe (1978) provides us with another possible explanation for the code-mixing that takes place in the classroom, which he views as a result of social norms and not linguistic constraints. Romaine (1995:179) contends that “for the isolated bilingual individual, the norms for the use of the two codes may be those of the separate communities in which the languages are native, but for the bilingual in a community of other bilingual, speakers may create their own norms which are quite different”. For Romaine (1995:179) the result may “lead to the creation of a new language...” (or one could say a mixed language) which could have “...a dramatic cumulative effect once there is a younger community of native speakers of the new system who have no exposure to the pre-contact system”. This is, however, beyond the scope of this investigation, but it would certainly be an interesting area for future research.

It is, however, interesting to note that outside of the classroom, in the townships, I heard no code-mixing of English or Afrikaans words with Xhosa, but there was a mixing of other African languages, as mentioned by both students and teachers. Both students and teachers noted during interviews that many words from several African languages were often used in the communities and a number of teachers mentioned that they make use of words in other African languages in their own speech outside of the classroom, in particular Zulu and Sotho. Moreover, in interviews both teachers and learners confirmed that English was commonly not used in these communities, stating that in general they *never used English outside of the school*. What's more I have noticed during the time spent in South Africa that the media makes use of this code-mixing phenomenon where English tends to be the base language and then either Afrikaans or African language words are mixed in (Sesame Street – a children's program – makes use of this type of language switching and mixing).

In analyzing the use of code-mixing the following Natural Science lesson was observed in mid October, 2001, which shows how one teacher used code mixing to teach a lesson about liquids, solids and gas. What is interesting to note is that the majority of the lesson took place through the use of Xhosa, but that the actual concepts (solid, liquid and gas) were always in English. In explaining the concept of gas the teacher proceeds as follows:

Gas *akunakho ukuyibamba, kodwa ungakwazi ukuyibona* (Gas is something that you cannot touch, but you could see the steam). *Xa sibilisa amanzi siye sibone umphunga* (When we boil water, we usually see water vapor). *Amanzi ke ngoku akwimo gas* (The water is in the form of gas).

Focusing in on this lesson we can see how the explanation takes place in Xhosa with the concept of gas in English (these are in bold) code-mixed into the Xhosa sentence. Here this teacher is clearly making an effort to mainly use Xhosa as a resource in her attempt to explain the concept of gas with the English term mixed in.

On the other hand, in the overall project that this investigation is a part of the use of code-mixing in Tanzania was noted (cf Brock-Utne, 2003c; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003b) as working somewhat differently than it does in classrooms in South Africa. In the following excerpt from a classroom observation in Tanzania in a Form I geography lesson, the teacher starts the lesson in English and the student responds in Kiswahili, and the teacher then code-mixes using the student's response of the concept in Kiswahili with English. The student then continues to give responses in Kiswahili and the teacher continues to code-mix the Kiswahili concepts into the English based sentence.

T: These are used for grinding materials. It looks like what?

S: *Kinu* (mortar)¹⁸²

T: *Kinu* and what?

S: *Mtwangio* (pestle)

T: It looks like *kinu* and *mtwangio* and it works like *kinu* and *mtwangio* (the teacher continues to describe other apparatus) (Rubagumya, Jones & Mwansoko, 1999:18).

Brock-Utne (2003c) argues that in this example the teacher is satisfied with the answer from the student as the student has the right concepts. The fact that these concepts are expressed in Kiswahili does not seem to bother the subject matter teacher, who does nothing to expand the vocabulary of the student within the English language (in South Africa the concepts are generally in English with the explanation in Xhosa and thus code-switching works somewhat differently in these two contexts). From the excerpt we do not even know whether the teacher knows the correct terms in English. Even if he does, he does not bother to make his students partake of this knowledge. Furthermore, Brock-Utne contends that had the teacher insisted on an answer in English, he would most likely have been met by silence. It is obvious from this example that the more complicated, specialized terms are those expressed in Kiswahili, not the everyday ones. I agree with Brock-Utne's analysis that an argument sometimes heard that teachers code-mix because the more advanced terms are not developed in the language of the

¹⁸² In the original *kinu* is translated pestle and *mtwangio* is translated mortar. This is, however, incorrect. *Kinu* is mortar and *mtwangio* is pestle. Brock-Utne's correction here of the original text has been double-checked by consulting Prof. F. Senkoro, the Head of the Kiswahili Department at the University of Dar es Salaam (Brock-Utne, 2003c).

learners does not seem to hold true for Kiswahili. However, this argument appears to hold true for those African language speakers in South Africa as my observations reveal that much of the code-mixing taking place in the classrooms consists of mixing the key words and concepts which are in English into Xhosa sentences. The focus of the lesson is then on these words and concepts with the majority of the explanation following in the mother tongue. Another explanation can be that many of the advanced scientific terms may have been developed in Xhosa in the apartheid period (cf Mahlalela & Heugh, 2002; Mahlalela-Thusi & Heugh, 2002), but have been forgotten because of a lack of use and the current lack of books in the African languages. In fact, this last account appears to be more likely as I discussed the issue with a number of Xhosa speaking academics at the University of Western Cape and the University of Cape Town and they confirmed that much of the terminology was developed during apartheid, but that many of the teachers do not use these terms as some have either forgotten them or in the case of younger teachers (those who did not experience Bantu education) they have never been exposed to the terms and thus are simply not aware of them. There are also examples of learner support materials developed during this period that are in African languages, which display the depth and breadth of terminology used in the textbooks during the first period of Bantu education to 1975 (Mahlalela & Heugh, 2002; Mahlalela-Thusi & Heugh, 2002).

Finally, in comparing Tanzania to South Africa another interesting issue may provide some explanation for the variation in the way code-mixing takes place in the two countries. In South Africa teachers have not been trained in Xhosa and thus they do not know all the vocabulary they need while in Tanzania the teacher-training colleges are the only secondary schools in which Kiswahili is the language of instruction, therefore, the teachers in Tanzania have been exposed to the vocabulary they need.

7.4.1.3 Translations

Another coping strategy that is used by teachers in their classrooms is more or less full translations of everything they say in English to Xhosa. This strategy is seen as the most controversial. Krashen (1985) points to the dilemma of relying on this strategy, arguing that it is an ineffective way to teach an additional language.

“Ineffective bilingual programmes use the first language in such a way as to block comprehensible input. This occurs when techniques such as concurrent translation are used, in which a message is conveyed to students in one language and then translated into the other. When this is done, there is no need to “negotiate meaning”; the child does not have to listen to the message in second language, since he [*sic*] knows it will be repeated in his [*sic*] first language, and the teacher does not have to make an effort to make the English input comprehensible (Krashen, 1985:18).

During the fieldwork period I observed this strategy and although it was used less often than code-switching or even code-mixing it was seen as a related coping strategy, which warrants a discussion of its use in the classroom.

The fact that everything is repeated naturally slows down the lesson and it is similar to a situation when an interpreter is used who will translate everything somebody says in a language we do not understand into a familiar language. Naturally such talks take about double the amount of time compared to a talk in just one language (or simultaneous translation). We also do not pay much attention to the first language spoken because we know that we shall get that information repeated in a language we understand better (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003b). During the reading comprehension task given to the students, one of the teachers involved essentially translated the entire story for the students line by line. In addition, this teacher even translated all the questions given to the students afterwards. The following highlights some parts of the lesson:

T: Today I will be reading a story but I will not tell you what the story is about...you will tell me what the story is about...*Ndiza kufundisa ngebali. Eli bali andizi kunixelela ukuba lithini na, kodwa eli bali.... uza kundixelela wena xa ujonge imifanekiso... ukuba inoba lithetha ntoni na. Siyevana? (Today...I am going to teach a story. I am not going to tell you what it means, but this story....you are going to tell me when you look at the pictures.... what it means. Understand?)*

T: What do you see on the picture?...*Uyabona ke asiphenduli sonke, siza kuphendula (What do you see? We do not all answer, we are going to answer one by one. What...?)* One by one, what do you see on the picture?

After this initial question asking period by the teacher, she then read the story for the students line by line and translated each line into Xhosa as she went along. Needless to say this lesson took 90 minutes to complete and at this point the students still had to take time to answer the eleven questions at the end. On the other hand, the lessons conducted in Xhosa only took roughly 25-30 minutes to complete (cf table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Amount of time used for reading comprehension lesson

	New Crossroads	Crossroads	Khayelitsha
English only	40 minutes	45 minutes	45 minutes
Xhosa only	30 minutes	20 minutes	NA
English/Xhosa	90 minutes	60 minutes	NA

(Note the time includes only the amount of time used by teachers in teaching the lesson and does not include the time used by the students to answer questions afterwards).

The teachers themselves are aware of the amount of time it takes to teach a lesson using full translations and although all the teachers recognized this, one teacher in particular made the following comment in an interview which describes this situation well:

“It takes a lot of time, you cannot teach a lesson that is meant for maybe 35-40 minutes. You cannot teach it in that period of time because we have to translate first everything and that takes a lot of time” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

This teacher then recognizes the amount of time it takes to translate from English to Xhosa and how they are then unable to complete the lesson in the allotted time. As one can plainly see from the example given above if all the teaching takes place in this way, with teachers translating everything that they say, they will be unable to complete the prescribed syllabus for the year and students, as well as teachers, will continually play ‘catch-up’. It was also noticed during classroom observations both in Tanzania and South Africa that the students did not seem to pay much attention to the teacher during the initial explanation of lessons in English only (cf 7.3.1) and it was only when the translations took place that students really took notice (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2003b). The result is that translations, as it has been described above, are a waste of time both for teachers and students as it is an ineffective method for teaching the additional language and for promoting reading comprehension.

7.4.2 Methods that reflect a banking concept of education

In dealing with the issue of how teachers cope in teaching through a foreign medium it was discovered that teachers displayed a banking philosophy of education. This philosophy involves teaching methods known as “the lecturer method”, “the classical approach” or as some critics put it “the chalk and talk method”. Regardless of the particular name, the idea behind each method is similar in that they are teacher-centered. I prefer to make use of

Freire's (1985) terminology the *banking concept* of education. His criticism of traditional education views the teacher's task as one in which the teacher is "to 'fill' the students by making deposits of information which he or she considers to constitute true knowledge" (Freire, 1985:57). Here learners are viewed as passive, inattentive, and often bored. "Real" learning does not take place (cf 7.3.3) rather empty facts are recited, as students are required to "memorize the contents narrated by the teacher" (Freire, 1985:61).

This banking method often utilized in the classroom is, in part, related to lack of materials and it may be utilized for other reasons as well. In using this method many teachers promote the use of memorization techniques or choral response by the students (Chick, 2000; Hornberger & Chick, 2001). It is argued that teacher-centered instruction found in the classrooms in this investigation, which other researchers have argued are "so pervasive in black education in South Africa" (Chick, 2000:232) make use of chorus teaching – where children repeat in chorus or so-called safe talk (Chick, 2000; Hornberger & Chick, 2001). Teachers and students engage in specific interactional practices that Chick characterized as *safetalk*, talk that creates a space where teacher and students know more or less what to expect and how to behave in class, but where a high price is paid in terms of (a lack of) learning. Chick interprets their practices "as a means of avoiding the oppressive and demeaning effects of apartheid ideology and structures...as colluding in preserving their dignity by hiding the fact that little learning is taking place" (Chick, 1996:24). Keith Chick also stressed the mixed consequences of their resistance practices:

While serving the short-term interests of teachers and students, such strategies, I suggest, contributed to the widely documented high failure rate in black education in apartheid South Africa, and made teachers and students resistant to educational innovation. The strategies thus served to reinforce and reproduce the inequalities between the various population groups which characterized apartheid society (Chick, 1996:24).

For Chick (1996) *safetalk* refers to a type of chorus teaching which is reflective of a banking concept of education. The essential characteristics of the interactions reflecting this concept of education is highly centralized and teacher-centered and where pupil responses are generally in the form of group chorusing. In order to highlight the use of chorusing I select the following episode from the data collected which represents a typical a classroom lesson. During a reading comprehension lesson in November 2001 Zandile used the chorus teaching as follows:

T: What do you see on the picture?
S1: There is a furniture.
T: There is a furniture inside the room...a furniture. Class?
Ss: (chorus) a furniture
T: The man is on the window. The man is sitting on the window. Class?
Ss: (chorus) The man is sitting on the window.

Apart from the initial response from the first student the remainder of the lesson consists of first prompts by Zandile followed by the group chorusing responses of the students. In this example Zandile is looking over a picture along with her students before reading the story in English. Here she is pointing out objects in the picture and having the students repeat after her certain information that she has first given. Moreover, in the first part of the lesson Zandile repeats the grammatical error (“a furniture”) made by the first student and instead of correcting it she reinforces the error by having the entire class repeat it in chorus. In accepting the grammatically incorrect answer the teacher practices “safe talk” by simply encouraging a chorus of answers from the pupils, which consists of words or phrases repeated by the pupils after the teacher’s prompting (Chick, 1997, 2000; Hornberger & Chick, 2001). Here there is neither further explanation nor elaboration of the words and student responses are limited to repeating the information provided by the teacher in the form of group chorusing.

Memorization is one more way teachers reflect a banking concept of education. Here teachers require their students to memorize facts and vocabulary, even entire stories with their assistance. Other researchers have described similar examples of this. Brock-Utne (2000a) notes that while following up a UNICEF project for the Norwegian Ministry in Guinea in 1996 she had come across a number of students who had been taken to the blackboard to read aloud a passage in French. At first Brock-Utne (2000a) notes that it seemed as though the students read very well and had good pronunciation, but that she soon noticed that they were not reading the passage, but had learned it by heart.

My own observation notes from February 2002 shows how memorization is practiced in the classrooms. Here Nosisa is attempting to teach her students a short passage of text in English.

The teacher continues to read the passage line by line and the students repeat after her. They add more each time and then they practice by turning away from the board to repeat the passage aloud from memory, always adding a few lines until they are able to recite the entire passage by heart.

What ends up happening is that these students become very good at memorizing, but what they receive is empty knowledge of words without meaning.

Another way that teachers reflect a banking concept of education through the use of group chorusing is related to test taking or what I refer to as *false testing*. In 2001 I noted a lesson in my observation journal, which points out how Olwetha uses chorus teaching and memorization in preparing her students to take a test.

The teacher begins in English by saying “there are three types of fruit”. The students are asked to repeat in chorus this sentence. Then she asks the students to name these three types of fruit. No students raise their hand. Then the teacher asks in English “how many types of fruit do we have”? She gets no response so she gives her pupils the correct answer “we have three types of fruit”. She then has the class to repeat in chorus the sentence three times. Then she prompts the students to repeat the following: “it becomes ripe in summer”, referring to one category of fruit. This lesson continues on in this way for twenty minutes. I notice a number of students appear to be bored and have lost interest in the lesson.

Now the class is asked to read a passage about fruit aloud (again in chorus) that they copied into their workbooks last week, a story they have been practicing for a week. While they are reciting the passage the teacher begins to write the test up on the board (9 questions in all), after which the learners copy these sentences down in their workbooks. When the teacher has finished writing up the sentences she goes over each question reading it first aloud and then having students repeat after her. She then has the students read the questions aloud in chorus and then she provides the answer to each question. After all this the teacher directs her pupils to take the “test”.

In my initial analysis of this lesson, taken from my fieldnotes, I argued that this test was actually not a test at all given that the teacher actually gave her pupils the answers. In fact what was required of the learners was to simply memorize the answers she provided and to repeat in chorus after her. It can certainly be argued that although there is teaching taking place in this example learning is highly unlikely to have occurred. Furthermore, these learners have received little assistance in constructing or presenting knowledge and it is doubtful that they understood the majority of the lesson given that little elaboration on the part of the teacher was provided. Here the aim of the teacher appears to be the limited input of key sentences that the students were then required to memorize and as such reflective of a banking concept of education. Chick (2000:232) suggests the information that students are often required to chorus (as in the memorization examples above) is not new information, but “information already available to the students before the lesson”. Thus his conclusion suggests that the function of this chorusing is social as opposed to academic. In addition other

chorusing examples involve a second kind of cue and signals participation as opposed to understanding. Thus for Chick (2000) two types of cues were involved – one as the example above highlights where the information already available to students is repeated and the second a response to a supposed open question in which chorus responses are without exception “yes”, signaling participation rather than a level of understanding. In looking at the second type of cue suggested by Chick (2000) the following example taken from the corpus collected in this investigation shows the affirmative chorusing response by the students. Furthermore, this chorusing can be seen as partially fulfilling the social as opposed to academic function as students merely repeat the phrase “it caught the thief” that the teacher had mentioned earlier.

T: Niyasibona istory sihamba njani? **(Do you see how the story goes?)**

Ss: (chorus) Yes Miss

T: Walibamba isela walisa e-police station...So, kubantu bonke bala family, oyena mntu wayeyithandainja ,...yayingubani?...Yayingu Mr. Dakile. UMr. Dakile ngutata wekhaya. Kwakutheni ukuze abe uyayithanda?...because...afune ukuba mayihlale?...Because yathini?...**(He caught the thief and took him to the police station...So, among all the people of that family, the only one who liked the dog...who was it?...It was Mr. Dakile. Mr. Dakile is the father of the house. Why did he like it?...because...and wanted it to stay?...Because what did it do?)**

T: It caught the thief.

Ss: (chorus) It caught the thief.

T: Siyevana bethuna? Sihamba sonke? **(Do you follow people? Are we together?)**

Ss: (chorus) Yes Miss

T: So we are going to read the story for the last time in groups, then we are going to answer the questions. This group can stand up.....nime ngeenyawo. **(stand up)**.

T: We are going to get these words.....are we together?

Ss: (chorus) Yes Miss

T: Very good. Turn to another page.

T: Siyayazi into eyayisenzeka phaya? **(Do we know what was happening there?)**

Ss: (chorus) Yes Miss

T: Le nja yayisenza ntoni? Singayiphendula imibuzo? **(What was the dog doing? Can we answer questions?)**

Ss: (chorus) Yes Miss

As it is evident from the example above the cue offered by the teacher requires the students to provide mainly confirmative two-word responses (“yes miss”) and that this can be seen as a face-saving strategy by teachers (for other examples of this in South African classrooms see Chick, 1996, 2000). Moreover, what is interesting in the case of this study is the rhythmic manner in which teacher and students synchronize their chorusing behaviors and it has been suggested that this “synchrony contributes to the perception that purposeful activity and learning are taking place” (Chick, 2000:233).

Chick (2000:233) makes the following observation in his study which I believe provides a clear understanding of the two different kinds of cues provided in the examples above:

I discovered that the students are required, in response to both kinds of cue to provide mainly confirmative one- or two-word responses, or responses which repeat information on the board or information which has been recycled again and again...[by the teacher]. This suggests that chorusing gives students opportunities to participate in ways that reduce the possibility of the loss of face associated with providing incorrect responses to teacher elicitations, or not being able to provide responses at all.

In addition to providing students with the possibility to avoid the loss of face associated with being wrong in class these acknowledged chorusing behaviors may furthermore provide them with a sense of purpose and accomplishment (Chick, 1996, 2000) and equally “these styles may also help teachers avoid the loss of face associated with displays of incompetence” (Chick, 2000:234). In this way teachers “ensure that the lesson develops along predetermined lines, and that the opportunities for students to raise issues and problems that teachers may not be competent to handle are few” (Chick, 2000:234) and as a result the discourse associated with such styles are referred to as safe-talk (Chick, 2000).

7.5 Tests and testing

With the greater demands placed on education as a result of globalization, governments have been increasingly focused on educational outcomes. Assessments both national and at a more micro level have come to epitomize this account on academic performance. Moreover, assessments come in all shapes and sizes and range from international or national monitoring exercises to work with individual students in classrooms and these assessments each have their purposes. In this section my focus is on the individual students, which is the micro level assessment, the purpose of which is to show students’ performance after a reading comprehension lesson in which the language of instruction varies. Before proceeding it is important to mention that although the comprehension test may be questioned with respect to its fairness,¹⁸³ it does represent a typical exam that the students in the classrooms in this study face on a regular basis (cf Ellis & Murray, 2000:138-140).

¹⁸³ The comprehension may be questioned by other researchers on a number of issues, for example, the artificial situation or the test itself as a suitable tool for assessment. It is not my intention to take up this discussion here, but the test was discussed with the teachers beforehand as to its relevance to the curriculum and to other forms of assessment that the students have been given. The teachers agreed that this comprehension test was similar,

South Africa, like many other countries, has relied almost exclusively on a system of national examinations to identify the learner who “passes”, meaning the learner who advances to the next level; who receives a qualification; who is admitted to a university or other tertiary institution; and even who may receive a bursary. The issue of national examinations in South Africa has not been without criticism. These examinations are invariably written; they usually emphasize the essay, and they depended heavily on recall. Whatever the intent, the effect unfairly penalizes those learners who are not able to express themselves fluently and accurately in their second/additional language.

Jonathan Jansen (1999:online no page numbers) contends that there are widely agreed criticisms of the matriculation examination (the national examinations discussed above) that he articulates in the following six points:

First, the matriculation examination is a very weak estimation of what the average student knows and can perform in the subject areas of study.

Second, the matric exam is an extremely poor predictor of success at university; there is both anecdotal as well as research evidence to this effect.

Third, the matric exam in many subjects lays much of the emphasis on what students can recall or memorise, not what they can construct and imagine in new and unpredictable contexts.

Fourth, the matric exam is a devastating psychological instrument in the lives of black people by simply affirming disadvantage and marginalisation through all the public media.

Fifth, the matric exam is an unreliable indicator of the state of the education system for the simple reason that schools on both sides of the resource spectrum (severely disadvantaged and highly privileged institutions) deny any straightforward conclusions about what really happens inside schools.

Sixth, the matric exam as a high-stakes examination is already subject to considerable moderation (read political alteration) as is alleged both in the impossible escalation of Mpumalanga’s results for 1998, and the “bonus marks scheme” for black students who wrote the 1998 examination. In short, we are all complicit in a game of mutual verneukery (cheating).

although not identical, to that which the learners have been exposed to in the past and thus I felt that their approval warranted its use. Furthermore, the comprehension task was taken from a Grade 4 textbook entitled *Let's Use English*, which was available in the teacher resource center at UWC. The book (for L2 language learners) was published by Heinemann and written by Rod Ellis and Sarah Murray.

To this list we can add another agreed upon criticism, specifically the issue of language, and the fact that the language of the examination is either English or Afrikaans. What is even more puzzling is that the Department of Education does not question why the speakers of African languages are required to take all their exams through the medium of English or Afrikaans only and how these learners are discriminated against by this practice. It is only the speakers of African languages that are denied the opportunity to take their exams in their mother tongue while both English and Afrikaans speakers are able to take their exams in their mother tongue. Regarding the language issue in the matric exam Zubeida Desai (2003:62) states “currently, moves are afoot to translate all Grade 12 question papers [the formal matriculation exam papers] into all nine African languages. However, there has not been any decision on permitting learners to write their exams in their mother tongue”. Teachers, on the other hand, **do question** the practice of requiring learners to take their examinations in this FL medium. This is evident from the statement by Avela in her response to a question I asked about the language competence of the staff:

“I have a problem because English-speaking people are talking their language and when they are writing their external exam their questions are in English, it’s easier for them. For our learners it’s difficult because the questioning, when you are writing the external exams the questioning is very difficult for them...They would do better [in Xhosa] because it is our language. The Afrikaans people are taught in Afrikaans and their questions are in Afrikaans and English. It’s only us that are examined in a foreign language” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

In her statement Avela is questioning this practice while simultaneously challenging the hegemony of both English and Afrikaans, the only two official languages during Apartheid, by recognizing that only African language speakers are disadvantaged in having to write their exams in “*a foreign language*”. Although the Department of Education does not officially acknowledge this paradox they do appear to recognize the injustice in this practice, as speakers of African languages are awarded a *bonus mark* of 1.05% in the content subjects in their matriculation results. This practice is strongly criticized by many language experts and one only wonders how long speakers of African languages will permit such a policy to continue. Zubeida Desai, the former chair of PANSALB, has strongly criticized this practice stating that “by awarding this bonus mark it is an acknowledgment on the part of the Department that these students are disadvantaged” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02). She also argues that “this does not address the issue, which is that these learners are disadvantaged in that they are not able to write their exams in their mother tongue” (interview: Desai,

14/03/02). Furthermore, Desai contends that” this practice is not openly discussed and that parents and students are often not fully informed” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02). Moreover, in February 1999 PANSALB sent a letter¹⁸⁴ to the Department of Education disagreeing with this decision and in the letter it is argued that through this practice “it assumes that a few extra marks can compensate learners for the frustration they must experience in accessing knowledge through a second language”.

Neville Alexander, another outspoken language activist, had this to say about the exam issue:

“Never mind the fact that for the moment the teachers [Xhosa mother tongue speakers] themselves in primary schools generally are not proficient in English...the reality is that they mainly use Xhosa but the children will write their subjects in English and of course that is where the problem starts...at the least, in a democratic country they should have a choice of a language in which they wish to write their examinations” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02).

Thus the choice issue that is so clearly proposed in the LIEP is not a reality in that learners do not even have a choice in which language they are able to use to write their exams. While the assessment issue is not only important, as noted in the introduction in this section, it is likewise not without criticism. In considering this issue my desire was to shed some light on the subject. In considering this I wanted to take a typical exam that the students face on a regular basis and show how the use of different languages in both teaching the lesson and in the assessment might result in different outcomes.

In November 2001 I gave a reading comprehension task to a total of 278 students in three different schools located in the three different townships in the Cape Town area (New Crossroads, Crossroads and Khayelitsha). The comprehension task was originally designed in English and subsequently translated into Xhosa by Dumasani Spofani (Dumasani also translated the students scripts afterwards from Xhosa to English). The comprehension task consisted of a picture with a short story followed by a set of both multiple choice and open-ended questions, which the students were required to answer afterwards.

The comprehension task was given in two schools using three different teaching methods (language variations). Thus the language of the lesson and assessment varied and teachers

¹⁸⁴ I received a copy of this letter from Zubeida Desai, who wrote the letter on behalf of PANSALB during her term as the chairperson of PANSALB.

were given specific instructions with respect to the language to be used. (1) Two teachers were given instructions to use English only in teaching the lesson with the test and the story handout being provided to the students in English only; (2) Two teachers were given instructions to teach using Xhosa only with test questions and the story provided to the students in Xhosa only; and (3) Two teachers were given instructions to teach the lesson as they would normally do so and this resulted in code-switching where both English and Xhosa were used interchangeably. The test questions and the story provided to the students were in English only, which is the normal way tests and examinations are given in these schools. In the third school only the English teaching method followed the test question in English was used (cf 5.3.6 for an explanation).

The overall results for this comprehension task are shown below (table 7.6).

Table 7.6: Reading Comprehension Task Results

	<i>New Crossroads</i>	<i>Crossroads</i>	<i>Khayelitsha</i>
English only	3.3 (N=38)	4.8 (N=39)	4.1 (N=47)
Xhosa only	7.9 (N=38)	7.4 (N=35)	NA
English/Xhosa	6.5 (N=45)	4.8 (N=36)	NA

Key: the mean scores are given.

These results show that the students who received instruction as well as the story and questions in Xhosa had an average score of 7.9 (N=38) and 7.4 (N=35) out of a possible 11. For the groups who received instruction, the questions, and the story in English only, the average scores were 3.3 (N=38), 4.8 (N=39),¹⁸⁵ and 4.1 (N=47) respectively out of a possible 11. Finally in the code-switching version, which is noted as the English/Xhosa version, teachers were free to teach the lesson as they normally teach (often using both English and Xhosa interchangeably) the task was given to two groups of Grade 4 pupils in two different schools with the following scores 6.5 (N=45) and 4.8 (N=36) respectively.

What remains an interesting point regarding this task is that when students are taught a lesson in their mother tongue and they are able to use this language for examination purposes they

¹⁸⁵ Originally the average score in this class was thought to be 5.1 not 4.8. However, after rechecking all the test scores a correction error was discovered and thus the corrected average score for this class is 4.8.

perform far better than when they are required to use English only or English mainly. This may indicate to the Department of Education the language issue concerning student assessments needs to be revisited and so that students, in the words of Zubeida Desai, are no longer “disadvantaged in that they are not able to write their exams in their mother tongue” (interview: Desai, 14/03/02). Furthermore, by allowing students the option for assessment purposes the choice issue, so prominent in the LiEP, becomes a reality and not merely a symbolic gesture.

7.6 Which language or languages and for what purposes?

In this next section I examine two related questions. 1) Which languages do teachers want to teach in and pupils want to be taught in and why? and 2) Which languages do parents want their children to be taught in and what is the reason for their choice? During the interviews conducted with these stakeholders I specifically focused on the question of which languages and why or for what purposes in order to gain some insight into this issue. Moreover, I gathered information to assist me in answering these questions through the many informal discussions with these same stakeholders as well as other research that looks at the issue from the parents’ perspective. Likewise, these questions are related to the policy aspect of this investigation as both donors and elites influence not only language attitudes, but also language use in society (Rahman, 2001).

7.6.1 The teachers, parents and others speak

In asking which languages they would like to teach in and why, it was obvious that a number of factors influenced teachers’ decisions. During an interview with one of the teachers in the teacher’s lounge we were discussing the language issue and the use of the languages in the classroom, both the use of English and Xhosa, I asked Zoleka¹⁸⁶ if she thought it would be helpful to use Xhosa as the medium of instruction after Grade 3 her reply was as follows:

“I don’t think so they must learn English, to speak English, to communicate with the others” (interview: Zoleka 28/11/01).

¹⁸⁶ In this section more of teachers’ own personal opinion is being presented as opposed to merely the obstacles faced in implementing the language-in-education policy.

Zoleka's reply suggests that she views English as necessary for her pupils to enable them to speak to the "others" and thus it appears that in her view it is not what is good for the learners pedagogically that informs her decision, but rather social factors. When asked if they could be taught in Xhosa and still learn English as a subject Zoleka argued, "they cannot be taught in Xhosa" (interview: Zoleka 28/11/01). When asked why not she again stated that, "they must speak so they can communicate with the others". Zoleka's constant reference to the "others" is suggesting that it is necessary for these learners to learn English to enable them to communicate with white English-speaking middle-class South Africans. This type of thinking, as displayed by Zoleka, is, however, reflective of the beliefs of only two of the teachers interviewed. Moreover, in Zoleka's response it is possible to see how power is manifested as English becomes the focus at the expense of the pedagogical aspects and how English might be seen as a more prestigious language as opposed to Xhosa as this way students can communicate with others who do not speak Xhosa.

As Fairclough (1989) argues it is the dominant classes who exercise power and this is done in two basic ways – through coercion and through consent- either by forcing others to go along with them or by convincing them that it is in their best interest to do so. For Zoleka the suggestion that Xhosa could be used as a medium of instruction is not a realistic alternative and her response reflects that her consent to the prevailing order has been won (Apple, 1996) resulting in her belief that English only should be used from Grade 4 onwards. Furthermore, as Fairclough argues consent is not necessarily a conscious choice, rather it is accepted as part of institutional practices:

Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices which appear to be universal and commonsensical can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become *naturalized* (Fairclough, 1989:33).

Fairclough refers to this as ideological power, "the power to project one's practices as universal and 'common sense'" and assigns it to a central role in ensuring control by consent. This is reflected in the arguments by another Grade 4 teacher Nosisa who, like Zoleka, also displays this consent and does not question the practice of using English as the medium of instruction, although she agrees that the learners are struggling. Nosisa was very negative even to the idea that Xhosa could be used as a medium of instruction. When I asked her if she

thought Xhosa should be used as a medium of instruction beyond Grade 3 she replied “*No, no that is going to kill children*”. I then asked her why she didn’t think it was possible she answered:

“Xhosa has no scientific words even if you can try to teach them, Xhosa is going to kill the mind of the child. We are in a trade world you know the world that is keeping us out sometimes. If we focus on Xhosa only we will...our children mustn’t go anywhere else they must stay here in South Africa. They mustn’t compete with other worlds they must compete at home. I don’t know because here we’ve got 11 different people or languages the common...the language that make us to be able to speak to each other is only English” (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/01).

Here Nosisa appears to have accepted the commonly held belief that Xhosa does not have scientific terms and she does not even see that it might be possible to develop them. Although this argument is completely false (cf Mahlalela & Heugh, 2002; Mahlalela-Thusi & Heugh, 2002) it is still an argument that is often heard. Nosisa’s belief in the absence of scientific Terms in Xhosa was reflected in her teaching during the Natural Science lesson in which she used Xhosa to explain the lesson, but the concepts (solid, liquid and gas) were given in English only. Yet, another explanation could be that Nosisa does not want her students to be subjected to the racist discrimination she went through. What is clear is that she has high hopes for her students in the future to leave South Africa to become doctors, lawyers, etc. Nevertheless, Nosisa does not see even that there is the possibility to use Xhosa as the medium of instruction while learning English as an additional language:

“English as a second language if we...we’re saying other learning areas must be in Xhosa “ne”¹⁸⁷ English we must teach English...People argue it’s not about Xhosa it’s about even using English rather than saying I think teach them English that’s for communication but if my child wants to be a doctor which language are suppose to be used, to be a lawyer he’s not going to be talking in Xhosa he’s going to mix with other groups of people and they must use the English words. Xhosa is so long we can even make comparison of an English paper here and the same thing that is written in Xhosa. You’ll see Xhosa will be a big book because it’s long very long¹⁸⁸ and with these names that you are trying to give now that are not there, but you are trying to find

¹⁸⁷ Ne is a commonly used expression in the townships and Afrikaans in origin meaning “no” and used to correct oneself.

¹⁸⁸ The grammar of Xhosa is of a type called agglutinative (a language in which the words are formed by joining morphemes together): suffixes and prefixes are attached to root words and stems to convey grammatical information. Xhosa also has the characteristic noun class, or “gender” system which is common to all Bantu languages. There are many more classes than the masculine, feminine, and neuter genders of familiar Indo-European languages. The nouns in each class are roughly related in meaning. For example, there are classes for people, relatives, animals, plants, objects, abstract concepts, etc.

them most of our words they originate in other languages you know” (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/01).

Here we can see how not only the language of the dominant class is valued by Nosisa’s response, but also the knowledge and life experiences as she is only able to see that English can be used to teach certain subjects. Moreover, she argues that her own mother tongue does not have the terminology to be able to compete with English. In an interesting article Crawford (1999) discusses the problems of non-Xhosa-speaking nurses and doctors in the health profession in Cape Town. Her study highlights the need for health care professionals that are competent in Xhosa and thus the argument by Nosisa that if her child wants to be a doctor he must use English is not completely correct. Likewise, Nosisa’s belief that English is the only option is reflected in two pre-1994 election ANC documents (cf 6.3.1).

The insistence that only English can be used beyond a certain level reflects a disempowering approach to language instruction and it is a replication of the inequalities outside of the classroom, which reproduces the stratum of people who can do only the least skilled and least literacy dependent jobs (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1979; Brock-Utne, 1982; Tollefson, 1991; Apple, 1996).

However, the majority of the teachers interviewed (six out of a total of eight) challenged the hegemony of English and argued for equity for the African languages and for their learners. For example, Avela describes the way that she sees the hegemony of English working:

“We were fed that the white’s language is superior. Even if you dress nice you are told you look like an “umlungu” [a white person in Xhosa]. It’s like everything nice is related to the white people” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

When I asked Zandile if she thought that Xhosa should be developed to use as medium of instruction past Grade 3 or 4 she replied:

“Yes because the government’s policy considered the mother tongue to be the first language so Xhosa has got that chance of being taught up to the highest level” (interview: Zandile, 27/11/01).

Here Zandile believes that there is a chance for the African languages given that the government has recognized them in its policy, but she also warns that African language

speakers should not underestimate their languages. Zandile also points out that some parents in the townships, those who can afford it, are taking their children to other schools (ex-Model C schools and ex-colored only schools). A commonly held myth of the reason for this is that parents want their children to learn English (Heugh, 2002; Vivian de Klerk, 2002a). However, Vivian de Klerk (2002a) and Heugh (2002) suggest that there are other factors behind this and Zandile points to what she believes is the real reason:

“We need our kids to get an education, the best education but at the same time we need not to underestimate our language and we are the Xhosa-speaking people we need to have the best choice in Xhosa in everything. I think if things were up to the best in our schools, our kids would not have left them to go to the Model C schools because of no facilities. It’s not necessarily the language, but the facilities, the matter of not having facilities” (interview: Zandile, 27/11/01).

Thus the commonly held myth that parents want “straight for English” or “English only” for their children and that is why they take them to other schools is challenged by Zandile, which she argues is more because of the lack of facilities in many of the township schools and not the language. In her research Vivian de Klerk (2002a) also notes *better resourced learning environments* as one of the main reasons cited by parents who send their children to English medium schools (cf 6.3.1). For example, when I spoke to Zukiswa’s mother (the student that transferred out of the township school) her reason for the transfer of her daughter was because the new school had more books, better trained teachers and better facilities. Thus for her the language issue was not the reason.

The language issue is also reflective of the broader issues of power in South Africa as English is seen as the language of economics. As a Department official noted:

“But you understand it’s what we call economic apartheid. It’s a way of ensuring that the privileged remain privileged” (interview: Department of Education official, 26/02/02).

When I asked Avela if she thought Xhosa should be developed to use further she answered:

“Yes, I think it should be a choice, a learner’s choice even in high school!” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01). .

Furthermore she connected the language issue to exams arguing that the students should be allowed to take their exams in Xhosa:

“The learners would benefit from that, you see they would pass because the coloreds and white people think that we are stupid. They think that we are stupid because so many of us don’t pass the external exams. It’s only because we are taught in their language and not ours” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Here Avela points to the issue of choice, which is stipulated in the LiEP. However, she points out that although there is the stipulation in the policy, the reality is that learners do not have the choice. This lack of choice for schools too was pointed out by one of the principals who mentions that “we have no choice as there are no materials available in the African languages after Grade 3” (interview: P2, 01/03/02). The issue of materials was discussed earlier (cf 7.2.6) and it is something that the publishers along with government are responsible for influencing, as there are very few materials in the African languages in, for example, mathematics, history, science, etc. after the Grade 3 level. However, publishers are in the business of making money and if the government would stipulate the use of African languages the publishers would then be required to develop the materials in these languages.

The failure of the Department of Education, the ANC-led government, and the wider society to take seriously the question of language in South Africa is the real issue. During an interview Alexander had this to say.

“They [the ANC-led government] were not convinced that it [equality of languages] was possible. So the **lack of political will**, the gap between the ideal and the reality and until recently the increasing gap has to do with the fact that people were not really convinced that this was possible. Certainly not in their lifetime and most of them do not look beyond their parliamentary life. So I think that is the more general issue that we have got this gap. There are very few political people in the ANC in other organizations, even the parents that have taken the language question seriously, that even understand the language question. And it is pointless trying to prettify the reality, people don’t understand the relationship between language and the economy, language and identity, even though they ought to understand it they don’t understand it...So I think that is the issue, the real issue you know that the Constitution says/implies that we must promote multilingualism, but the bureaucracy and particularly the political leadership are not willing to put their money where their mouth is” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02 emphasis original).

The wishes of parents *are* important and they need to be considered. Although I do not have my own data¹⁸⁹ concerning parent's views on the issue of language choice (except for Zukiswa's mother) I found that their views should be included and thus I have relied on other sources of information for these insights. In examining the myth around the issue of parents wanting English only Heugh (2002) cites a Department of Education and Training (DET) report from 1992 where the issue choice of medium of instruction was examined. Heugh (2002:181) argues:

Assuming that there was some basis to a growing perception that black parents in particular wanted the medium of instruction to be English from the word go and in preparation for the years after apartheid, the DET, the department responsible for the education of African children at the time, offered parents a choice of language medium in 1992. Much to the surprise of officials of the department who were convinced that parents would choose English from the start, the following statistics were returned:

Table 7.7: DET Language policy options to parents in 1992

Straight for English	22%
Gradual Transfer to English	54%
Sudden Transfer to English	13,4%
Retain Status Quo	7,5%

(Source originally in Heugh 1993 cited in Heugh, 2002:180)

*67% of schools returned voting records

What is obvious from this survey is that the majority of parents chose the option which gives the mother tongue a large amount of time within the bilingual options given. Furthermore, Heugh (2002) is critical of much of the anecdotal evidence¹⁹⁰ being used by researchers in South Africa to give prominence to the misconception that parents want straight for English or English only.

In addition to the DET report PANSALB commissioned MarkData in 1999 to conduct a national socio-linguistic survey for the purpose of determining attitudes towards languages, people's wishes regarding language use and development, along with establishing the degree

¹⁸⁹ I did not have the opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with parents directly on this topic (I was only able to speak to Zukiswa's mother in more detail). However, during the observation period I did speak to parents about a number of issues, including language choice, and their thoughts are reflected in my own fieldnotes. In addition, this project, as mentioned, is part of the larger LOITASA project; therefore the parents in the project serve as a source of data in this section along with other sources of information.

¹⁹⁰ This myth was questioned in the argument by Zandile referred to earlier and a myth I argue is incorrect.

of multilingualism in the country (PANSALB, 2000b). In the survey one of the questions asked was:

“Think about the situation of language of instruction in government-funded schools and universities. Which of the following would come closest to the way you feel, *but* you may choose more than one item *if* you wish?” (MarkData-PANSALB 2002:23 emphasis original).

Table 7.8: Maintenance of the home language alongside a second language/English

	First answer	Multiple answers included
Mother-tongue instruction and good teaching of another official language should be available	38%	37%
Learners should have the opportunity to learn both their mother tongue and English equally well	32.6%	42%
Learners should learn through both English and their mother tongue	21%	39%
It is more important that learners learn in English than in other languages	7.6%	12%
Total	99.2%	130%

(Source MarkData-PANSALB 2002:122; PANSALB 2000b; Heugh, 2002).

What this data (table 7.8) demonstrates is that for the majority of the informants, 70.6%, favor the maintenance of the home language (mother tongue) throughout education or the maintenance of the home language (mother tongue) alongside a second language/English, an option that learners in this study also wanted after having been given clarification. This suggests that parents might recognize the benefits of bilingualism as opposed to monolingualism and at the very least this data suggests an additive approach is favored.

In addition to the data in the PANSALB survey, parents involved in the LOITASA project also give their support for mother tongue education.¹⁹¹ An experimental aspect related to this study has already begun in two primary schools in Cape Town and one of the schools involved in my research is also part of the larger LOITASA experimental project. In order to begin the project it was first necessary to obtain consent from the Ministry, which was given in the early part of 2002. This was followed by consent being given by the individual schools and teachers. Finally, consent from the parents was also needed as the learners in the schools fell under the category of minor learners. It was first necessary to have a meeting with the

¹⁹¹It is the permission of parents for the LOITASA part of the project that are discussed here.

parents explaining the project. This meeting took place in the fall of 2002, as the project was scheduled to begin in the 2003 academic year. After the meeting a letter of consent, which also outlined the aims of the project, was drafted (this letter was drafted in Xhosa and subsequently translated into English; see appendix F for the English version).

The action part of the research began with the Grade 4 learners then the following academic year and thus permission was sought from those learners in Grade 3 the previous year. The remarkable response, however, by the parents in wanting their children to participate in the project where Xhosa was to be used as the medium of instruction in Grades 4, 5 and 6 for Geography and Science was overwhelmingly positive as free books were to be supplied to all the pupils regardless of their participation in the program. Thus the belief that free books would be the deciding factor was taken into consideration by the research team; therefore, a decision was made to provide materials for all the students regardless of their participation. As Desai argues (personal communication July 2003) “the popular perception is that “parents want English” is not supported here as the letters we received back from the parents indicate another story”. In school X a total of 48 parents responded and out of that 40 agreed to their child’s participation. In school Y 41 parents responded with a total of 36 giving their consent for their child’s participation. Although not all the parents responded the number of parents saying yes was noteworthy. Moreover, the fact that not all the parents responded does not necessarily imply that they did not want their children to participate, but rather it may be related to the historical aspect as Walker and Archung (2003) suggest parents often view their role in the schools as passive as opposed to active. Thus the argument that when given a choice parents want English is questionable (PANSALB, 2000b; Heugh, 2002; Vivian de Klerk, 2002a). Likewise, this investigation suggests that parents may not necessarily want a *straight for English* approach and that explanation may have more to do with resources than language. Moreover, as I have already discussed the overall majority of the teachers also opt for Xhosa as the medium of instruction with quality English teaching as a subject. The result is that it is not **either/or** but **both**.

7.6.2 *What do the students think*

The acceptance of English as the only possibility is also reflected in some of the responses of the learners. Thus the students reflect an **either/or** mentality in which they do not see the

possibility of bilingual schooling. When one learner was asked about having Xhosa as the medium of instruction throughout the primary level along with learning English she replied, “I don’t think that would be nice. I don’t think something like that would work because I don’t think Xhosa will help me” (interview: Zukiswa, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani). This response suggests that the student is unable to see the opportunity of bilingual schooling, where both English and her mother tongue would be part of the curriculum and the benefits that she would receive through increased use and valorization of her mother tongue. As such her perception of the social factors surrounding the two languages may be more important than the actual environmental factors that affect bilingualism (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). For Zukiswa it could also be that she was transferring out of her township school and entering a school where the medium of instruction was English only and this might have influenced her thinking. Another learner also initially felt that Xhosa would not help her in the future.

“I know Xhosa more than English so maybe that is why English will help me in the future not Xhosa...if you don’t know English then you can’t get a job” (interview: Trima, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

Both these learners appear to display an instrumental motivation for learning English in that they only want to learn the language for commercial, educational, or other instrumental reasons (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), a motivation which is believed to be less effective. For Gardner and Lambert (1972) an integratively oriented learner is at one end of the continuum in which the language learner is oriented principally towards representatives of an ethnolinguistic community with whom the student would like to have ties with, whereas the instrumentally oriented learner lies on the other end of the spectrum and is mainly interested in using the cultural group and their language as an instrument of personal satisfaction with little interest in the members of that group. Thus Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that the integratively oriented learner might be better motivated given the nature of the goals, which is more likely to sustain the long-term effort needed to master an additional language. Moreover, others argue that the foreign language learner’s motivation is generally instrumental and the pupil may study the language very conscientiously to fulfill the immediate short-term goal of passing exams (Ringbom, 1987). What’s more, in the classroom setting the decisions as to the most significant aspects of the additional language are made by the teacher and includes the teaching method, the syllabus and even the exams. For the two students noted above, they are instrumentally motivated as English becomes their access ticket (Giroux, 1983) and without it

they see no future. What is most ironic is that the very language that these learners struggle to obtain is the language that prevents them access to knowledge. Likewise, they view their mother tongue as not providing any future possibilities. In fact, this instrumental motivation to learn English was displayed by all six learners and without it they would not be able to secure a job. Thus for them English played an important role in their future.

English will be helpful in the future if I am, like, working for the white person then I will need English (interview: Phelo, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

Still another student says:

If you don't know English then you can't get a job (interview: Trima, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

Furthermore, most of the learners (all but one – Zukiswa) expressed a change in their thinking regarding language choice (medium of instruction and language learning), when it was explained¹⁹² how they could have Xhosa as the medium of instruction and learn English as an additional language, as a subject. This explanation was not done with the intent to persuade learners into changing their minds. Rather all the options and possibilities were made clear to the learners, as it appeared that initially they were not aware that there might be another alternative available. Thus when students were told that there was the possibility to learn both languages and that they would not be denied English five out of six expressed a positive response to the idea. For these students there is an urgency to learn the additional language as the language has an enormous instrumental value, but where becoming bilingual would not mean that the students would lose their own linguistic and cultural identity. For example after this explanation Trima expressed the following:

I choose Xhosa because I understands more Xhosa and Xhosa is the best although English is nice, but that English has to be done as a subject (interview: Trima, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

¹⁹² I provided a similar explanation for the teachers, but they displayed more rigid thinking in relation to language learning and those teachers who were very pro-English did not even want to consider that other options were available.

Another student had a similar change in her choice at first saying she would like to learn in Xhosa up to University, but that she had to learn other subjects as well, but when she was told that it could be possible to do both she stated the following:

That would be nice to have the other subject in Xhosa fine because I could understand easier. So for me I would like to have Xhosa all the way (interview: Lusanda, 03/12/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

While yet another student specifically referred to being able to use Xhosa in the subject Science:

I prefer Xhosa, for example, in Science that is where I am going to understand because in English I only understand bits and pieces and if it is in Xhosa I will understand rather well (interview: Sipho, 27/11/01, interviewed in Xhosa, translated by Dumasani Spofani).

Thus learners expressed their preference for their mother tongue, but the possibility needed to be explained to them first. This also suggests that when questionnaires are used to assess learners' attitudes with reference to language choice the options available may not be fully apparent. The result is that initially learners may choose English as the preferred medium, but when given a clear explanation of the possibilities they may then reconsider this and choose their mother tongue as a medium of instruction with English as a subject. For these students becoming bilingual may be the best motivation, as they display a desire for both languages, and that there is a need to strive for a comfortable position in two cultural systems, which may help guarantee them that they really belong in both cultures (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

The central question here is one of choice, which reflects broader issues of power. We may then ask. Who ultimately gets to decide the medium of instruction in these classrooms? This choice according to the LiEP was to be left up to the parents and their children, but it appears that the real choice is not theirs but those of the dominant group.

7.7 What do schools and teachers say about the policy

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to look at one final part of this investigation. The conceptions that schools and teachers have about the LiEP may have some bearing on how that policy is transmitted into practice. It is at this level that the actual policy is played out. For Rist (1994) there are two levels of decision in the policy arena. The first involves the

political aspect, which includes the establishment of the broad parameters of government action and translating intentions into policy. The second phase of the policy cycle is that of implementation. It is at this level that policy is to be translated into programs, procedures and regulations (Rist, 1994). In this phase policy-makers need to gather information from a variety of sources, different than that in the policy development phase, in order to effectively tune the operational activities of the policy tool and the allocation of resources (Rist, 1994). The literature on policy implementation indicates that this task is not easily accomplished (Rist, 1994; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984).

Our normal expectation should be that new programs will fail to get off the ground and that, at best, they will take considerable time to get started. The cards in this world are stacked against things happening, as so much effort is required to make them work. The remarkable thing is that new programs work at all (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984:109).

As was concluded in the policy chapter Alexander (1995:38) argues that the government has shown a lack of political will to implement the ideals of the LiEP and thus it has remain “a dead letter” on the part of the political arena. Here I want to look at this issue from the grassroots level and see if there is some connection. Thus the organizational response in this implementation is looked at.

First we can look at the qualifications of those responsible for the implementation effort. Here not only teachers’ own qualifications are examined, but also those of the school’s governing bodies should be considered in relation to policy issues. Hence teachers should be qualified not only to understand the policy, but to effectively be able to implement a model of education, which promotes additive bilingualism as stated in the LiEP objectives. As noted in the previous sections only one of the eight teachers involved was noted as fully qualified with a Bachelor in Education in addition to having specialized language training, while the remaining teachers have qualifications from the previous system, thus they have had education up to Std. 8 (Grade 10) plus two years of teacher training (cf 7.2.4 and specifically table 7.2 for an overview). Within the new system these seven teachers would be defined as under-qualified as the new qualifications require matric (Grade 12) plus three years of teacher training or a Bachelor of Education (a four year B.Ed. degree). Under these circumstances it would be difficult to expect teachers to be able to translate the policy objectives into effective classroom practices promoting an additive approach to language learning without substantial

support from the government and the Department of Education, which I have pointed out previously there is a lack of political will on the part of the government to back up the policy objectives.

Qualifications, however, do not relate only to the teachers, but also to those of the school governing bodies (SGBs). In the LiEP it is specifically stated that the SGBs are responsible for developing a language policy for the schools and in doing so they “must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism” (DoE, 1997a:3). SGBs include not only principals and teachers of the schools, but also parents. The ability of parents to participate in the development of such sophisticated policies is seen as challenging given that many of these parents do not have the know-how or expertise need in policy development. Hence, the principals in both SC2 and SC3 confided that the language policy development, stipulated in the LiEP, was placed in the hands of the schools themselves and that the schools have not had sufficient time take on this task. Hence, competing demands of the day-to-day activities of the schools have superseded the language policy development at the level of the schools. One principal hinted that even if he were to take the initiative and develop the policy himself it would go against the underline philosophy of the LiEP. “I could draft one, but in a Democracy no single individual must decide” (interview: P1, 27/11/01). This in each of the three schools an unofficial policy was in place where there was a transition from mother tongue to English in Grade 4, which coincided with the addition of new subjects that students were not exposed to previously. Thus in reality the de facto 1979 apartheid language policy is still in effect.

Next the interest shown by the school’s administration and the teachers in implementing the LiEP is considered. For the administration, as noted above, the daily responsibilities of running the school appears to take some precedence over the implementation issue. While principals did confide they thought the ideals behind the LiEP were admirable, the realities of implementing it were something else. As one principal pointed out; “How can we implement this policy if we do not have the materials to do so?” (interview: P2, 01/03/02). While, the other principal suggested that teachers have some responsibility as “the majority of teachers are not facilitating it”, but he does agree that “constitutionally we can use any of the three languages” (referring to the three main languages in the Western Cape – Afrikaans, English and Xhosa) (interview: P1, 27/11/01). Thus from the level of the school a combination of lack of resources and teachers influences the implementation and the school administration is seen

as the conciliator between the policy level, often referred to by principals in terms of the provincial Department of Education and the national sector, and the teachers.

As for a number of the teachers, in fact, all but one found the LiEP ambiguous and confusing and in some cases I was asked to inform them about the policy. Zandile was very specific in this request telling me that “I would like a clear explanation about the policy as I am not sure what it is about” (interview: Zandile, 27/11/01) while others, like Avela, related her lack of understanding the LiEP to the general lack of information from the Department of Education. Focusing in on the divisions that exist between different racial groups in South African society Avela argues her point as follows:

“...it’s not the language policy, it’s the way they interpret, use new things...it is like the white people will get Curriculum 2005, the white people and the colored people get it before us. When you go to workshops these people are answering things and you wonder where did they get this information. You don’t know about it (the Curriculum 2005 and the LiEP) and you just heard there is a workshop. So they were taught before us. We don’t know and if we could only just get these same things” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Still other teachers feel that it is the Department that has let them down and that does not provide the information or support needed.

“It’s that all the information from the Department it comes to us in English and sometimes it is in Afrikaans, but not in our language...If maybe the department could give more support to the teachers that would help a lot” (interview: Ramela, 22/11/01).

None of the teachers pointed to the school management as having a responsibility to provide assistance or information concerning the LiEP. Hence, reflecting the view of the principals that the school management is an intermediary. Still two of the younger teachers, those most positive towards the use of English as the medium of instruction, interpreted the LiEP as something which involved English only and not a reciprocal policy. Thus for them multilingualism involved the need for speakers of African languages to learn English as it is “the global language” (interview: Nosisa, 28/11/01), but this multilingualism did not require the speakers of English or Afrikaans to learn the African languages. This type of thinking was apparent in a number of comments from teachers like “they must learn English to speak to the others” (interview: Zoleka, 28/11/01). Still the issue of choice is pointed out by Avela who

argues that “I think it should be a choice, a learner’s choice even in high school” (interview: Avela, 26/11/01).

Although the majority of the teachers found the underlying ideology of the LiEP commendable, the stark reality of the lack of information, lack of training, lack of resources and lack of support to implement the policy ideals left it as something that was unattainable.

7.8 Summary

In this investigation it was found that although officially¹⁹³ the policy of the schools (cf 7.7 and chapter 6) declared that at the Grade 4 level the transition from Xhosa to English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) should take place, the reality was different. It was determined that these policies were of an informal type, that is, none of the schools involved in this investigation had drafted official policies according to the recommendations set forth in the LiEP. As a result the de facto 1979 apartheid policy remains in force in these schools, with the transition to English as a medium of instruction taking place in Grade 4. Meanwhile, despite the official government policy claiming support for the African languages there appears to be a lack of political will to truly support these languages and their development. What is more, as one principal noted “a number of policies are missing...and the governing body must decide, but the problem is the majority of our parents have never been to school so translating and really explaining the documents takes time” (interview: P2, 27/11/01). This principal, who speaks both Zulu and Xhosa, highlights the major problem in the government’s decision to devolve a number of decisions to the school level and how these schools along with their governing bodies do not have the capacity required to develop many of the sophisticated policies. Also even if these schools were to make the choice, set forth in the Constitution and the LiEP, that Xhosa was to be the medium of instruction, this would be possible only in theory since in reality there are no materials in the mother tongue available to the schools to implement such a policy. This appears to be where one of the major problems lie and although I have shown there are materials available from the past (Mahlaele & Heugh, 2002) the fact remains that there is still some skepticism in making use of these

¹⁹³ The policy in all three schools was not an official written policy and, therefore, can be described as unofficial in one sense. However, this was the stated policy in each school, which then served as their official policy in this sense.

materials. As Mahlalela and Heugh (2002:28-29 emphasis added) point this fact out, they also make the following recommendation:

...there was indeed considerable work accomplished in the area of terminology development and that despite many of the criticisms about the legitimacy of such work, many scholars of African languages today are of the opinion that whilst mistakes may have been made and there is a need to properly evaluate existing work, much of the criticism was often and continues to be exaggerated...[and while] there may very well be dubious and unacceptable material from the period 1955-1975... [there] is sufficient evidence to call for a thorough analysis...[of the materials which] may help...to speed up the process of producing modern, appropriate and educationally useful textbooks for pupils of *all* language backgrounds today and for the future.

The school governing bodies alone do not have this capacity and that they need assistance of language experts and government if real language development is going to take place.

Additionally, observations showed that Xhosa was often used during the lessons, in the form of code-switching, code-mixing and full translations and this use of Xhosa was confirmed through interviews with Alexander, Desai, a Department of Education official and the teachers. This study has highlighted that although the use of code alternation is acknowledged, its use as an effective means to teach both subject content and the additional language simultaneously remains a debated issue. Furthermore, after teachers have taught lessons through the combined use of Xhosa and English they then wrote texts in the form of sentences, tests, etc. on the board in English, this is done in all subjects except Xhosa, which after Grade 4 is taught only as a subject. The learners then copied down the sentences from the board into their workbooks. As a result, on initial examination by the Department, school administration, other researchers or parents it appears that English is the LOLT. This is the situation, in fact, throughout the primary school level.

It became clear in this investigation that both teachers and students are struggling with using a language as a medium of instruction that is foreign and additionally a language that neither is proficient or confident in. The result is that learners may be left with partial subject knowledge and little or no real knowledge in the FL either. Furthermore, these students find themselves in more or less a sink or swim situation and those who cannot swim in the FL ocean often suffer academically and may eventually drop out of the system (Monare, 2003; DoE, 2000b). Newly released statistics from the national Department of Education show that

over the past six years less than 39% of the country's 18-year-olds have made it to matriculation (Monare, 2003) and although these statistics are not specified according to population groups we may speculate that the majority of these learners are African language speakers. In order to support this belief I reviewed the statistics available in the EFA Assessment Report for South Africa (DoE, 2000b:37), which are shown in table 7.9 below.

Table 7.9: Percentage of Children Aged 6-14 Out-of-School by Various Background Characteristics, South Africa, 1996

Characteristics	Percent
Population Group	
African/blacks	17.3
Colored	9.4
Indians/Asians	4.5
Whites	9.3

The report also notes that national and official data are not available on repeater and dropout rates, but that information from the former black education departments for 1990-1993 is available (DoE, 2000b). This data shows that dropout rates were highest in Grade 1 with 18.1% in 1993 followed by 5.8% for Grade 5 also for 1993 (DoE, 2000b:36). This suggests then that there is some cause for alarm and that initially as learners progress through the educational system they may be more likely to drop out or that even a large number drop out early on in the system suggesting that they are unable to swim at all with the highest percentage of dropouts being African students. The result for the learners in this investigation then may be similar to that of immigrant children in which the outcome is one of subtractive bilingualism as opposed to additive.

In examining the issue of which language or languages and for what purposes the reactions from both teachers and learners showed mixed results. While the majority of teachers were positive to the use of Xhosa as a medium of instruction, they also recognized the need for students to be competent in English. This need was generally related to issues such as employment and in speaking with the "others". While students saw the need to have English for employment purposes they wanted to have Xhosa as the medium of instruction so they could better understand the lessons. For parents it is not necessarily the language issue per

say, but more so the issue of resources in the township schools that have an affect on their decisions concerning their children's education.

Finally, I highlighted that the coping strategies used by both teachers and learners vary in the effectiveness and that perhaps these strategies need to be focused on in greater detail in future studies.

Chapter 8: Summing Up

8.1 Introduction

The original goal in the NRC project, which this study is a part of, was to understand and document educational language policies and their implementation in South Africa and Tanzania. While the project leader, Prof. Birgit Brock-Utne, along with a group of Master students conducted research on the Tanzanian case, I focused my research on South Africa. Through this study a contribution is made to the discussion whether South African schools truly provide equal educational opportunities to the multiethnic and multilingual population of the country. This analysis is furthermore important to ascertain the effectiveness of the LiEP in promoting the use of the African languages in the educational sector, which may have implications for other multilingual states struggling with similar linguistic dilemmas. Thus an important point is the issue of generalizability or applicability to other contexts. How generalizable are the findings in this investigation? What are the implications of my findings for other multilingual states, particularly in Africa? These questions will be dealt with later in this section (cf 1.8 and 5.6.2 about the generalization issue as it relates to this study).

Moreover, during the course of this investigation a second and equally important goal was developed. In the original project proposal (Brock-Utne, 2000b) it has been stressed that much of the writings on issues of bilingual and multilingual education are not relevant to Africa. Many of the theories, and much of the literature, on the subject concern immigrant minorities, mainly in the North. Although, to some extent, the majority population in South Africa can be compared to such groups the fact still remains that they are a majority population and not an immigrant minority with the main difference being the language-learning context. While I, to some extent, make use of the theoretical foundations based on such literature, I found that there was a need to draw attention to the differences between these two groups as well as the similarities. As Glaser (1989) argues, theories from the literature are not to be applied directly, but rather used to compare and make adjustments. In that process some irrelevancies and relevancies may also be discovered. Consequently, my argument throughout this study suggests that the terms used to deal with the issue of language in education with reference to majority groups (often referred to as minority groups in a sociological sense) in postcolonial contexts, particularly in Africa, need to be critically examined. During the writing of this

dissertation I have attempted to do this (thus I did not present this discussion in the theoretical chapter as this was a result of my investigation) and as a result I have reviewed the work of a number of writers (most notably those working in the field of postcolonial studies) in an attempt to find alternative terms (for example, Freire, 1970; Gramsci, 1980; Guha, 1997; Said, 2003; Spivak, 1999; and Young, 2001). Through this search in the literature I found that the term *subaltern* attributed to Gramsci (1980), but reworked by Guha (1997) and others, and used interchangeably with the terms *subordinate* and *instrumental* in Gramsci's class analysis may provide the starting point in developing a new discourse. The sense of "inferior rank" could mean that the term subaltern might be particularly suited to describe the diversity of dominated and exploited groups. As for Gramsci (1980) subalternates are the in-between class as opposed to the masses. Young (2001:354) explains this further by highlighting this in the case of India:

The equivalent in India would be the Babus (i.e. the indigenous elite who speak English and were the principle mediators for the colonial power), not the peasantry...subalternity [is characterized] as the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, [etc.]

Additionally there are those who use the term subaltern to refer to members in the lower class of society (cf Young, 2001 for this discussion) while others, for example, Spivak (1999) have extended the use of the term to include gender and women's issues. Thus as Young (2001:354) maintains, in postcolonial studies the term *subaltern* has become synonymous for "any marginalized or disempowered minority group" and in this case an oppressed majority. It is along this same line of thinking that I suggest the use of the term subaltern as an alternative to minority in describing a group (the speakers of African languages in South Africa) that numerically is a majority, but a group that is still, in the sociological sense, oppressed, marginalized and disempowered as their languages (the nine African languages - Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga) have not received the necessary recognition and support they should have as stipulated in the Constitution and the LiEP. Additionally, I continue to use the term oppressed majority interchangeably with subaltern in the same way as Gramsci (1980) has interchangeably used terms in developing his analysis.

In this study I specifically challenged how the terms SLA and FLL have been used in the literature, which I have attempted to scrutinize and discuss. The argument that has been put forward is that the context in which language learning takes place needs to be considered in relation to the terms used in understanding the situation. Perhaps by simply looking at this context through the lens of additional language-learning (ALL), as opposed to SLA or FLL, we may be able to focus our attention towards the somewhat more recent and even more relevant postcolonial context of language-learning. In this way we may begin to see this situation as unique in that it is not necessarily a second language-learning context, as this term generally applies to the case of many immigrant minorities in a context that differs greatly from those participating in this study, and it is not merely a foreign language-learning context as the case may be for many languages learned outside of the country of origin because in South Africa both English and Afrikaans (the high status languages) are widely used in the country (a situation often different from a foreign language). Rather this is the case of a language-learning situation where there is the need to recognize the “historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages” (RSA, 1996:paragraph 6.3) in South Africa (namely the nine official African languages - Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga) while simultaneously providing *all* citizens the opportunity to “learn languages other than one’s own” (DoE, 1997a:1) in an additive way. Therefore, there is the need to provide for the development and use of the African languages in education, while simultaneously making available to *all* citizens the power varieties of languages (in this case English and/or Afrikaans) found within the country and the languages that the majority strive to obtain. Conceivably, from this perspective we may begin to develop theories (this questioning is the first step) that are more suited for this context and others like it.

Moreover, the approach (not the particular findings) taken in this investigation can be generalized to the study of subaltern groups in post-colonial contexts. In this ethnographic investigation I have attempted to demonstrate how the use of a critical approach provides a principled means of understanding how the use of theories and terms developed for immigrant groups in a Western context¹⁹⁴ may constrain our understanding of the language-learning situation faced by many of the learners from subaltern groups in post-colonial contexts (the first step as discussed above). Thus by problematizing and critically analyzing the use of many of these theories we may better understand what type of language learning is taking

¹⁹⁴ Makoni (1994) also cautions the use of concepts in the African context that are developed for immigrant minorities in a Western context given that the contexts may not be directly comparable.

place and as a result different methods of language teaching may apply in these contexts (this is the second step that needs to be taken through additional research). In this way the intention with my research is to make a contribution to the literature on bilingual and multilingual education not only for minority groups but also for majority or subaltern groups who are often treated as minorities within their respective countries (Brock-Utne, 1998). In fact it is one of the explicit aims of the NRC project that we develop concepts and theoretical understandings (Brock-Utne, 2000b).

Moreover, my critical approach taken in analyzing the development and subsequent LiEP can be generalized to other contexts where language in education policies are not seen as the point of departure, but part of the question under investigation. Thus by analyzing the underlying ideologies in the LiEP and its development this study serves to highlight how language may be used in the (re)production of power.

8.2 Policy and practice

Some languages are more “official” than others – used more in public domains.

Being in class does not mean being educated.

These two statements above, taken from my research diary, draw attention to the policy and the practice issues dealt with in this study. The main purpose of this final chapter is to draw attention to the important aspects of this investigation with the focus being on the “policy gap”.

8.2.1 The sociohistorical aspects of language policy

The multilingual situation found in South Africa is not unlike those found in many other countries, particularly in Africa. This study has highlighted that in South Africa language decisions in education have had more to do with issues of political dominance, power struggles, the preservation of privilege and the distribution of economic resources and not with pedagogical concerns. For nearly fifty years the majority of South Africans suffered from language policies aimed at social and political control. This was the period during apartheid where the ideology behind language policies was specifically designed for these

purposes. I have also suggested that during the period of British rule the policies served similar purposes, although they may have not been specifically designed as such and this is something that is often overlooked in the shadow of apartheid. As a result of the apartheid policies schools were used as a mechanism to restrict speakers of African languages access to power with language policies in education as a major component in the apartheid plan. The ultimate goal of these policies was separate and unequal development. The result was social and economic development of the dominant minority alongside the social and economic underdevelopment of the oppressed majority. Consequently, from this analysis it is possible to talk about a generalization as this situation may be found in similar contexts and more particularly in a postcolonial context.

An important factor that this study has highlighted is that historically the language issue in South African education has mainly centered around the position of English and Afrikaans and when the African languages were considered it was not for the benefit of those who spoke the languages as their mother tongue, but rather designed to serve the needs of the dominant minority (the whites) as the idea was to “further separate development and prevent African language speaking students from developing ambitions outside their own communities” (Hartshorne, 1995:309-310). This was most notably evident during the Bantu education period where African languages were used to divide and rule the majority black population and the languages were used as a reaction to the missionary education which the Nationalist government, that took over in 1948, believed was transmitting dangerous and alien ideas to their African students by turning them into “Black Englishmen”. Thus decisions concerning the African languages were taken *for* Africans and not *by* them (Hartshorne, 1992). In connection with the schooling for Africans the major concern was on the status of English and the African languages and it was not until the 1930s that the status of Afrikaans would be considered in black education when, in 1935, the government set up an investigation into Native Education, known as the Welsh Committee, which resulted in a new curriculum issued, in 1938 in the Transvaal and for the first time made both English and Afrikaans compulsory subjects. In the 1950s language planning in education was organized centrally and stood directly under government control. Language planning was top-down and rigid with differentiation between the various racial groups introduced to enhance their separate development while simultaneously securing the hegemony of the whites.

Under the Bantu Education Act in 1953 the foundations were laid for the development of the mother tongue in addition to an increased emphasis on Afrikaans. Thus in reaction to the hegemony of English both English and Afrikaans were made compulsory. The Nationalist government feared that if only one of the two languages were chosen English would continue to maintain its powerful position and as a result both languages were to be used as medium of instruction in secondary schools.

The result of my analysis of the history of language-in-education policies that have been in effect up to the time of the 1994 elections, shows that for the speakers of African languages a number of different approaches have been applied with different programs being utilized. The overall result is that for the most part historically African-language-speaking children have been exposed to a subtractive model of bilingual education while Afrikaans- and English-speaking children have been exposed to a dual-medium program that results in additive bilingualism. Moreover, the segregation programs in effect from roughly 1948 to 1976 can also be described as non-forms of bilingual education along with the transitional programs, which are described as more sophisticated versions of submersion programs. The result is that the term ‘bilingual’ in relation to the speakers of African languages has been “sheer rhetoric” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:579).

In an effort to critically analyze the policy developments leading up to and including the LiEP, which is based on the idea of additive multilingualism, I reviewed a number of policy documents and draft documents concerning the language issue not only from the ANC but also the NP (the political party in power before the 1994 elections and subsequently part of the government of national unity). I attempted to account for the relationship between discourse and social power as this type of analysis “should describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimized by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions” (van Dijk, 1996:84). One of the important dimensions is the patterns of access to discourse in which I explored the involvement of different actors and their roles in influencing public policy and how this was played out along with what was included and excluded in the various documents that preceded the LiEP. As mentioned above this type of analysis is generalizable to other settings and such questions are seen as important in assessing issues of power.

Early in the 1990s the ANC began to examine their position on language policy. Initially the ANC held a workshop in Harare to discuss language issues with the decisions about time, place, and who was allowed or obliged to attend being made by the ANC. Moreover, only those invited representatives were present at the conference and thus many individual voices were silent in this initial review process. Following this conference a commission was set up as a substructure of the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture, which resulted in a document entitled *African National Congress Policy Considerations* (ANC, 1992b). In the document it appears that the ANC made the assumption that parents were putting pressure on schools to use English from early on and thus parents were opting for English as opposed to the mother tongue. However, this investigation is an example that this is not necessarily the situation. As highlighted in chapters 6 and 7 this assumption was more a myth about public perceptions than a reality and that when given a choice many parents opted for a gradual transfer to English or they opted for the maintenance of the home language (mother tongue) alongside an additional language/English. My analysis also shows that the role played by the Language Commission fed into future policy decisions along with other ANC supported initiatives such as the NECC and NEPI and certainly the ANC's own internal language practice, as English has always served as the organization's working language, had some influence.

In my review there were also some independent contributions made (cf Trew & Desai, 1992) with reference to the ANC's language policy debate. These seem to have had little influence as more control and pressure appears to have come from larger ANC organizations, committees within the ANC as well as NGOs. In reviewing the ANC's position on language issues before 1990 I also searched a number of draft documents that emphasized that within the ANC there was a strong bias towards English. In its opposition to Afrikaans and combined with the use of English as a common language the ANC in many ways helped to structure the reaction of African language speakers.

The discourses used in opposition to apartheid and also Afrikaans played a crucial role in manufacturing the consent of the people. The discourses of much of the policy documents of the ANC show two types of characteristics: they are parasitic (dependent upon other discourses) and opportunistic (seizing upon powerful idioms that are available). Fairclough (1989; 1992; 1995) suggests that such features may be described as a more general property of intertextuality, where one text draws upon another. Thus it is possible to see how the discourses associated with the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa were being displaced

and appropriated by other discourses. For both the ANC and even some NGOs the hegemony of English became unassailable as it was seen as the only language, which could compete with Afrikaans as a means to power. The result was that “the option of promoting the African languages while also ensuring as wide and as deep a knowledge as possible of English” was never seriously considered (Alexander & Heugh, 1999:7). In reviewing the various NECC/ANC backed studies (NEPI) and policy documents (ANC, 1992a, 1994) intertextuality is evident in the way the discourse of political struggle is incorporated in to the texts. Moreover, democracy was being redefined as individual freedom, especially the right to choose the terms of linguistic participation in public life and education. This right to choose as opposed to apartheid’s centralized and government controlled directives is very apparent in both the Constitution and the LiEP.

In an attempt to redress the imbalances of the past, the interim 1993 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and in the subsequent 1996 Constitution, in Section 6(1), eleven languages are recognized to be official languages. As a result of this new law nine indigenous African languages (Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, and Tsonga) were included with the former two official languages, English and Afrikaans. Furthermore, Section 29(2) states the rights of citizens “to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable”. In July 1997 South Africa announced a new Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP), which introduced the eleven official languages and a new policy for schools on the medium of instruction. The main policy objectives of the LiEP are to promote additive and functional multilingualism, and sociolinguistic and – cultural integration. The new LiEP is “meant to facilitate communication across barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one’s own would be encouraged” (DoE, 1997a:2). The actual outcomes of this policy will be discussed in the next section.

It has also been argued in this study that the LiEP was the result of interaction between three main interest groups: the ANC, the NP and a diverse combination of sociolinguists, academics and political activists. Additionally, a number of NGOs were also involved including the NLP and PRAESA with influential individuals such as Neville Alexander and Paul Musker both playing a major role in the development of the policy. The role played by PRAESA in the LiEP’s promotion of additive bilingualism was seen as significant, but also there are

criticisms that the document gave too much prominence to the dual medium approach, which was heavily influenced by PRAESA. Moreover, the lack of specific recommendations in the policy as to how communication between groups is to be facilitated suggests that the status quo is maintained. The result is diglossia where English (and to some extent Afrikaans) are maintained as high (H) varieties and the African languages are still characterized as low (L) varieties with the black population being required to learn English and/or Afrikaans, but where the speakers of English and Afrikaans are not required to equally learn African languages.

It has also been argued in this study that the LiEP itself is filled with a number of other obstacles that have not been given any serious consideration. Some of these include a model (the dual medium also referred to as two-way immersion) that has been proposed, which will not work in all contexts in South Africa as the requirements necessary for this approach to succeed are not available in most schools. While other obstacles refer to the issue of choice, which is a reaction to the top-down centralized decision-making processes of the apartheid government. However, the ability of individuals to exercise this right is dependent on their having adequate access to information which will enable them to make informed choices, information that has not been provided to either individuals charged with this responsibility or to school governing bodies (SGBs) who are also responsible for developing language policies at the school level. Choice is also constrained by the availability of learner support materials in the African languages. Finally, the most interesting aspect as a result of my analysis of the actual LiEP is that nowhere in the document does it state that a transition from the mother tongue to i.e. English as the medium of instruction needs to take place. Yet many, including principals, teachers, parents and students assume that this transition **must** take place. The result is that the status quo is maintained and the de facto 1979 apartheid policy has remained in place, despite the good intentions stated in the LiEP. Alexander, who was heavily involved in the development of the LiEP, also confirmed the issue concerning the transition to English stating, “there is no decision in any government structure...which says that people must use English from Grade 4, *not at all*” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02). It is interesting to note that the groups of South Africans who actively use this opportunity of not switching to English as the language of instruction are white South Africans, mainly the Afrikaners who continue with Afrikaans, but there is also a German-speaking minority that continues with German as the language of instruction.

8.2.2 The classroom realities

Throughout the project I have argued that it is important to understand the language-learning context. Thus what possibly distinguishes the approach I take in this project from other language policy studies is the emphasis on understanding the dynamics of lower-level implementation (for studies that focus on the policy level only cf Alexander, 2000; Alexander & Heugh, 1999; Gerda de Klerk, 2002; Heugh, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2002; Kamwangamalu, 2000; Mathiesen, 2003; McLean, 1999; Webb, 1999). Rather than focusing on or limiting the attention to higher-level policy, which illustrates the intentions of the policy, it is crucial to understand how the policy is actually implemented at the level of the classroom, the main contribution of this study. This results in the possibility of identifying systematic discrepancies between policy intention and actual implementation. In connection with educational planning, the researcher needs to understand the micro level of the classroom interactions in relation to macro level policy decisions. Hence, the goal is not only to describe, but also to interpret and explain the dynamic, multilevel, multidirectional, and extremely political nature of language policy.

As teachers have considerable autonomy in how they implement a policy, it is essential to include an understanding of the teacher's perspective or beliefs into the micro-level analysis. Moreover, the students have their own understanding and desires and thus their voices need to be incorporated. Semi-formal and open-ended, taped and transcribed interviews with teachers and students have provided important information about the teacher's attitude toward and understanding of the language policy as well as difficulties in implementing the policy. As for a number of the teachers, in fact, all but one found the LiEP ambiguous and confusing. Although the majority of the teachers found the underlying ideology of the LiEP commendable, the stark reality of the lack of information, lack of training, lack of resources and lack of support to implement the policy ideals left it as something that was unattainable. Furthermore, both the school management and the teachers viewed the Department of Education as having the main responsibility in providing information and support for the LiEP ideals. The school administration was seen as having an intermediary position between the policy at the Department level and the implementation at the classroom level.

During the course of the participant observations more focused interviews with students and teachers about discrepancies between the intended policy and the actual implementation,

critical incidents, or particular learners have provided important explanations for behavior that was not always initially apparent. Thus I have been able to piece together the interviews/conversations texts, a form of intertextual discourse, to help understand the ideologies of both the teachers and the students.

What remains of critical importance is that each new piece of evidence has contributed to the interpretation of previous evidence and guided subsequent collection and analysis as suggested by grounded theory methods. The aim has been to identify patterns in the data collected from as many different directions as possible, and to pay particular attention to counter-examples and negative cases. This approach has provided an understanding of how the policy functions in the classroom context.

The result of my discussion presented in chapter 7 shows, for this study, that the transitional approach is the only option currently available. It is, therefore, important to see how well learners adjust to the foreign language (FL), namely English. In total six issues were found to be relevant to the transition from the mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction: input of the foreign language, exposure to the foreign language, parental support, mother tongue development, knowledge of the foreign language, and curriculum materials. In my summary here I will not discuss all these in detail, but rather highlight selected aspects.

For Krashen (1985) input is the essential environmental ingredient in learning an additional language and in the language learning frameworks by Wong-Fillmore (1991) and Ringbom (1987) input is seen as a vital factor in learning an additional language. In this study it was observed that the input of the FL is limited both in quantity and quality. During observations it was recognized that the input is highly controlled by the teacher and it is very selective. The input of the foreign language in the classroom is often restricted to specific subject content as opposed to language usage. Observations showed that the FL used in the classroom is narrow in its scope and the focus is on specific vocabulary words and concepts, which in turn are practiced through the use of repetition and memorization, which do not allow for creative language use by the students. Furthermore, in Chapter 7, I argued that in general an SLA context involves immigrants in countries where they come into contact with the target language both inside and outside of the classroom, providing opportunities for both formal and informal language learning. However, the learners in this study, as in many post-colonial contexts, do not generally come into contact with the target language outside of the classroom

setting and thus only have formal learning opportunities available to them. Given that these learners do not receive input outside of the classroom the input inside the classroom plays an exceedingly important role. The result is that the teacher serves as the major source of input and this fits more closely with the FL learning situation as opposed to an SLA situation in which peers often play a major role.

My research shows that the quality of the input learners receive, which is argued as being important (cf Krashen, 1985 and Wong-Fillmore, 1991), is inadequate and that this input may actually reinforce incorrect language usage. Teachers are unable to explain effectively in English the new concepts in the various content subjects and this is something that is very difficult with teachers who do not speak English with confidence or fluency, using outdated or insufficient materials and who have almost no contact with English speakers. Moreover, in interviews conducted with the teachers they highlighted their lack of fluency in English as one of the major obstacles they face in using the FL as a medium of instruction. The study shows that the majority of the teachers involved in this investigation do not have the knowledge and skills to support English language learning and to teach literacy skills across the curriculum. It also shows that the Department of Education both recognizes and acknowledges this paradox and in the words of one Department official he admits that in this situation “*no effective learning can take place*” (interview: Department of Education official, 26/02/02). However, it appears that very little is being done on the part of the Department, to remedy the situation. On the other hand, there are a number of NGOs (PRAESA is particularly at the forefront here) and small project initiatives that are attempting to have some impact on this situation.

In the LiEP the main goal is one of additive bilingualism, which entails gaining competence in the second/additional language while simultaneously maintaining the mother tongue. The term is applied to a context in which speakers of any language are introduced to a second/additional language(s) while simultaneously continuing to learn through their mother tongue (or primary language). The additional language (or second language) is not intended to replace the mother tongue in education, instead it is seen as complementary to the mother tongue. However, the teachers in this study expressed concerns that learners’ literacy in their mother tongue was low, which was further complicated by the added pressure to learn in a foreign language. The work of Cummins (1979; 1984; 2000) shows that although the two languages can develop independently of each other up to the BICS level (everyday communication level) the CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency) depends, to a

certain extent, on the development level reached in the mother tongue. In research conducted by Macdonald (1990) the distinction between BICS and CALP is drawn in which she argues that students should start out their learning of English with an orientation towards enhancing their basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) followed by a marked shift towards cognitive academic language learning proficiency (CALP) in the upper primary level. The argument is that learners should not be forced to use a second/additional language before they have achieved CALP using their first language as medium of instruction (Macdonald, 1990). In the South African context this means that mother tongue instruction that develops first language literacy for African language speaking learners is not just developing African language skills, but is also developing a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is in effect related to the development of English literacy and general academic skills. It is essential to note that although Cummins himself does not know how to “measure” CALP, the difference between the processing of language in informal everyday situations and language processing in most academic situations is still an important distinction that needs to be made (Macdonald, 1990). Moreover, additive bilingualism is said only to develop when both languages are valued and reinforced. This study shows that the actual amount of time spent on learning the mother tongue was much less than i.e. learning English as a subject. Observations showed that at times when there were not enough readers available in Xhosa teachers would instead just teach English as a subject or other content subjects in which English was to be used as the medium of instruction. Additionally, the mother tongue was reduced to a mere subject and not reinforced across the curriculum after Grade 3. Although the mother tongue was used for most of the talk time it was not supported as the main language of writing after Grade 3, which was reserved mainly for English. The result is a subtractive form of bilingualism as opposed to additive bilingualism. Moreover, in South Africa there is differential access to literacy for those who have English (or in some instances Afrikaans) as a mother tongue as opposed to those who are speakers of African languages.

What's more, although Xhosa is taught as a subject, there is little evidence in my study that any serious efforts are being made to encourage the learners to develop literacy in their mother tongue. During Xhosa lessons the focus tends to be more on oral and some reading skills as opposed to written skills. Thus written literacy development appears to be focused on English only or English mainly and thus on monolingualism and not on multilingualism. The continuous focus is on the transition to English and that English is needed to gain access to higher education, employment and in communicating with “the others”. These learners

certainly desire access to employment, higher education and upward social mobility. Yet, they mistakenly believe that having English, as the language of instruction (LOI) will be the best way for them to learn English. While English is seen as important the argument by many language activists and educationists (myself included) is that the best way to become proficient in English is not to use it as the language of instruction from as early a stage as possible, but rather to have good English language subject teaching (cf Desai & van der Merwe, 1998). However, the language that these learners so desperately seek to attain is believed to limit their opportunities for vocational and academic success in many cases. As such English becomes just another access ticket to the poor, a carrot held up in front of them, which they have no possibility of obtaining.

Learners' lack of knowledge in the foreign language also affects their ability to cope with having this language as medium of instruction. It was observed that when English was used as a medium of instruction the learners' ability to participate was greatly reduced. This was confirmed not only by the teachers, but also by the learners themselves, who commented on their ability to participate, stating that they understood only bits and pieces resulting in what I term the *Swiss cheese effect*. The result is there are holes or gaps in the students' knowledge, which may limit their ability to reproduce this knowledge during exams. Ultimately it is argued that students' competence in English is so limited that no "real" learning is taking place. This was clearly evident in the reading comprehension task I gave to 278 learners in November 2002. The results of the task showed that those learners receiving the English only version had the lowest scores followed by those who received instruction where both languages were used and finally those who received the task in their mother tongue received the highest average score with a number of individuals receiving 100%. The reading comprehension task helped to support my own observations and the beliefs of both the teachers and the learners that the mother tongue as a medium of instruction was by far the most successful. Moreover, the ability of the learners to use their own words in answering open-ended test questions was evident in the Xhosa version whereas those learners required to answer in English were more bound by the text resulting in direct citations from the text.

The lack of learner support materials available is also seen as a major contributing factor in the adjustment to the new medium. In all the classrooms observed the teacher was the only person who had the textbook, resulting in hours being spent on writing notes up on the blackboard and learners spending several more hours copying the information into their

workbooks. This reduces even more the amount of time spent on verbal communication in the FL. Textbooks also play a major role in constraining language choices, as publishers in South Africa do not publish books, except books for teaching the language as a subject after Grade 3 in any of the African languages. My review of the lists sent to me from the major book publishers in South Africa revealed that the books for teaching African language subjects are generally confined to readers in the various languages and even here there are only one or two titles in each of the African languages. There is no reason to blame publishers for this state of affairs. As previously mentioned, they are in business to make a profit and if the African languages would be used as LOI further up in the system, books would again be published in these languages as they were in South Africa and Namibia during the apartheid period (cf the study by Mahlalela & Heugh, 2002 for a discussion of the materials from this period). The issue of choice becomes “sheer rhetoric” as schools clearly do not have a choice if there are no materials available. Hence, in real terms people are not given a choice (as prescribed in the LiEP) to study through their own language because the infrastructure is not there (both material and human).

Furthermore, this study focused on the coping strategies learners employ in dealing with the foreign medium of instruction and, through the participant observations and interviews with the learners, four different strategies were identified; waiting for a mother tongue explanation, seeking peer assistance, use of the mother tongue, and guesswork. The strategy known as waiting for a mother tongue explanation appeared to be the most successful strategy used by learners particularly in dealing with the Swiss cheese effect that resulted when the foreign language was used as medium. When this strategy was employed the learners were generally able to achieve their objectives. The least successful strategy employed by learners was the strategy referred to as guesswork as students were often incorrect in their inferences resulting in their inability to complete the lesson or the outcome was incorrect, which may also suggest why this strategy appeared to be used only as a last resort when other strategies were not available.

Finally, through the use of observation data, interviews with teachers, teacher-trainers and other informants it was discovered that teachers employ a number of coping strategies in coping with the mismatch between home and community language on the one hand and the school language on the other. In total teachers made use of two main strategies known as;

code alternation and methods that reflect a banking concept of education. I will only briefly discuss code alternation here as this appeared to be the most significant of the two strategies.

In total three different types of code alternation were identified and are referred to as code-switching, code-mixing, and full translations. When teachers are knowledgeable in the primary language of the learners they are then able to employ any one of these code alternation strategies.

In the Western Cape at the various Universities and Technikons I was also able to confirm Ferguson's claim that the use of code alternation strategy is neglected or marginalized in teacher education and that it lacks legitimacy, that is, it is not recognized as a possible resource for teachers. In my discussions with eight different teacher-trainers I discovered that the code alternation practice is not dealt with by them in their pre-service or in-service teacher-training and as such teachers do not make effective use of this strategy. Although teachers themselves acknowledge the use of this strategy their belief regarding its effectiveness or possible effectiveness are often questioned as some felt as though they are *smuggling the vernacular into the classroom*, while others are unsure as to when and how to use this strategy. My investigation has confirmed what others have described as the *intentional but dilemma-filled practice* of code-switching as teachers indicate the need for the practice to enable the learners the ability to understand concepts and ideas, but since it is not dealt with in teacher education, acknowledgement and approval for its use in the classroom is not given. Rather than being used as a possible resource in learning the additional language more related to additive bilingual education, the use of the code alternation strategies, at times, appear to be used in an ad hoc and disorganized fashion. Hence, in the classrooms English and Xhosa are used as needed to simply get the information across to the students. Furthermore, the use of code-mixing often entails the mixing in of English terms and concepts into Xhosa based sentences. Yet, the full translation strategy is seen as the most controversial. Krashen (1985) points to the dilemma of relying on this strategy, arguing that it is an ineffective way to teach an additional language. By relying on concurrent translations, teachers effectively block comprehensible input, through which the learners are not required to "negotiate meaning" (Krashen, 1985). More work needs to be done in this area as it appears that in situations such as the ones found in this investigation, code alternation seems to be a crucial communicative resource for managing teaching and learning.

The conclusion that is drawn from this is that although English is the official language to be used, in many schools at least from Grade 4 onwards, to teach all content subjects the majority of the teachers are more concerned that pupils are able to understand the subject matter. As a result teachers make use of the code alternation strategy involving code-switching, code-mixing and full translations as one way of achieving this. Thus, acquisition of the FL becomes a secondary objective.

Language policy in South Africa seems to be highly influenced by international research on bilingual education. Particularly the work by Cummins (1981) which focuses on immersion programs that are effective for learners from dominant language groups whose L1 is valued and supported both at home and in the broader society. The focus on an immersion model is reflected in the wording of the LiEP. However, bilingual instruction is more effective for language minority students (or in this case majority or subaltern language groups) who do not fit this profile. Other arguments for a bilingual dual medium approach that PRAESA has explored, to some degree, are not seen as a viable option for the majority of schools in South Africa as the requirements necessary are not available in most schools. There are those at PRAESA, however, who have understood this, most notably Neville Alexander who commented:

“It is a very good thing that we set as our medium term strategic objective, that we set a dual medium system of education as that objective. In other words, broadly bilingual system, but with dual medium as the ideal where both the mother tongue and English are used as media, languages of teaching. And what particular combination is used and what particular method will depend on the school” (interview: Alexander, 25/02/02).

Thus in his statement Alexander does recognize that there may be a need to explore various options in different contexts. However, from the Department’s position which promotes one approach in the LiEP (the dual-medium also known as two-way immersion) at the expense of other alternatives indicates short-sightedness on their behalf. What remains a major point of concern throughout this study is the problem that the research in which this model is based on is the result of immigrant groups in a context that does not fit the South African reality. This may fit the reality concerning upper and upper-middle class black South African learners who are in an English environment, but it does not fit the reality for the majority of South African students who live in rural areas or townships near larger cities, environments where English is truly a foreign language. The issue that needs to be considered is that research should perhaps

rather focus on successful models of foreign language education as opposed to SLA in looking for an alternative and thus a more appropriate model. An in-depth investigation of the foreign language education models is beyond the scope of this study. Rather this type of work is proposed for future research. In closing, some of the foreign language teaching methodologies that might be looked at in future work could include: Audio-Lingualism, The Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching, The Natural Approach, Task Based Learning and Text-based teaching.

8.3 Prospects for the future

The material assembled in the seven previous chapters suggests that there is still much to be done in researching language learning in post-colonial contexts. Also there are countless questions left unanswered or even raised systemically within the confines of this investigation. In the end a line needs to be drawn and ideas for further work need to be considered or handed over to others. Hence, I close with a list of recommendations for contemplation and future examination.

My first recommendation recognizes that South Africa has created a language-in-education policy but the government has overlooked the issue of language planning in connection with that policy. Previously the task of language planning was done through the individual language boards (during apartheid there were separate language boards for each of the languages). Under the new LiEP it is not explained how the acquisition planning roles of DACST and PANSALB coincide with the efforts of the provincial ministers of education. Therefore, this study recommends that there is a real need for a single agency to coordinate the work of language developments on the part of all those concerned in order to reduce the risk of conflicting goals and duplication of efforts and to provide more continuity in this area.

The second recommendation argues that there is a need to integrate language of instruction with curriculum work. The lack of serious attention to language of instruction can be seen in the omission of integrating this policy with Curriculum 2005. The need for a carefully developed general curriculum in which the gradual transition from the mother tongue to English, in various subjects, would support the concepts to be learned in English by subject materials in the mother tongue, these materials would help to prepare the linguistic and

conceptual foundation for the transition. This would most likely need to be done in a few subjects per year with the transfer to English the following year (in only those subjects and not in all of them as it is now organized). Currently the transition coincides with the addition of a number of subjects, which students did not have in the foundation phase of primary school thus complicating the transition even more as students have not had the ability to develop the linguistic or conceptual foundation before being introduced to these subjects. Therefore, this is an area that needs to be given serious consideration.

The third recommendation suggests that a review of the LiEP should be conducted. The wording of the policy itself poses a problem in that it is too open for interpretation and it does nothing to strengthen or promote the development of the African languages. Furthermore, serious attention needs to be given in providing teachers with the support and information necessary if they are to realistically implement the LiEP. There needs to be the political will by the government to do something to ensure the survival and development of African languages and their status. By rewording the policy to include specific directives for implementation regarding the African languages policy-makers can show their conviction for the true promotion of these languages as opposed to the symbolic gesture by merely including the African languages within the policy.

The fourth recommendation refers to the argument in this study that there is a need to develop more appropriate theories in understanding the language in education issue in post-colonial settings. Thus continuing the work that has begun here is vital. Although a number of empirical studies demonstrating the use of African languages in education compared with the use of a foreign language as medium of instruction have been done, I maintain that this is still needed and it would be useful in revealing how students learn in their mother tongue in comparison to a foreign medium. This would also require the development of curriculum materials in the African languages, something that is currently a barrier to their use past the foundation phase. The NUFU funded LOITASA project, as mentioned earlier, serves this purpose as it involves an action component where an experiment such as the one described here is already underway. This project is in its third year and will continue until 2007 and involves learners being taught Geography and Science in their mother tongue and compares them with learners being taught the same subjects in English. The project also involves the development of learner support materials, which has been a significant issue and something that has caught the attention of NGOs in the country. Furthermore, a teacher development

component is part of the project and involves regular workshops to assist teachers in using the materials that have been developed and to provide guidance in teaching these subjects in the African languages.

Moreover, the discussion of the use of code alternation as a teaching tool needs to be focused upon in future research. Further development of this strategy could be achieved through documenting how and when it is used in the classroom. In this way researchers can assess ways in which it is used effectively and when it is inefficient. Giving legitimacy to this practice not only in research, but also in teacher training could allow for more efficient use of this teaching strategy, however, future research will need to determine this. This focus is seen as particularly important given that this strategy allows learners access to the curriculum, which they may not otherwise have when only the foreign medium is used. If a code-switching strategy shall be developed further and seen as a legitimate strategy, learners must, however, be allowed to answer exam questions in the language of their choice. Thus the provincial education departments should take steps to translate the examination papers and appoint markers from each languages group, which will then give learners the opportunity to answer all examination papers in their mother tongue. This will also send a clear message to parents and learners that children can benefit from mother tongue instruction.

8.4 Closing comments

In a country where language has been used to divide and undermine certain political, social, economic and cultural interests, it would seem necessary for language policy to become central in the elaboration of democracy and human rights. It is assumed that in the long term interests of the new political order in South Africa sensible, language planning would be utilized to maintain peace (by promoting tolerance of diversity), and prosperity (by using linguistic resources effectively). This research provides a striking reminder that few state officials have realistically considered the impact of language policy (and its absence) on broader social issues of transformation. Senior civil servants are not necessarily aware of the link between language policy at departmental level, and national priorities of reconstruction and development.

The confirmation for the new middle-class urban-centered, post-apartheid hegemony will be the extent to which it can accommodate the absent presence of the margins at the center and

conceal persistent inequalities, such as those discussed in this investigation, within the new unity and justify the unevenness of national development. One may say that the struggle for democracy and development in South African education has only just begun.

In closing I would like to use the words of Freire (1985:187) who discusses the example of Cape Verde, which I feel also describes the experience of South Africa.

We made our liberation and we drove out the colonizers. Now we need to decolonize our minds. That's it exactly. We need to decolonize because if we do not, our thinking will be in conflict with the new context evolving from the struggle for freedom.

This new historical context, which is intertwined with culture, can only be new to the degree that it no longer is colonized...a different mentality and a different culture is beginning to reemerge. Certain cultural behavior patterns that were forbidden by the colonizers, including language, expressions of the world, poetry, and music, are reappearing. People walk without having to bow any longer. They now walk upright, looking up. There is a pedagogy of walking in this new behavior, walking freely. All of these issues constitute a new way of thinking and a new way of speaking. Now you can see the tremendous problem there would be if this new thinking were not to coincide with the existing language. A new thinking expressed in the colonizer's language goes nowhere.

How can speakers of African languages then express new thinking if they are forced to do this through the colonizers' language, a foreign language? "The concept "education for all" becomes a completely empty concept if the linguistic environment of the basic learners is not taken into account" (Brock-Utne, 2000a:141). How can we expect children and adults to acquire knowledge and skills when they are taught through a language they do not understand? It is impossible to empower individuals and to build upon their linguistic heritage in a system that perpetuates the use of a foreign language of instruction for its learners. These learning opportunities are then not designed to meet the basic learning needs of the students if the language of instruction becomes a barrier to knowledge. Likewise, education cannot possibly be equitable and non-discriminatory when the medium of instruction is in a language that neither the teachers nor the learners can use sufficiently. There can be little doubt about who loses from the change from mother tongue to a foreign language as the language of instruction as early as in the fifth or even fourth grade of South African primary schools. If Africa is truly to have independence then policy-makers throughout Africa need to be reminded that it is the masses that ultimately suffer when a language is imposed on them through such policies as described in this study. In the end it is the students who pay the price

when forced to learn in a language they are not proficient in. The government and taxpayers also pay the price of having to employ graduates who have gone through school without receiving the expected education because the language of instruction has prevented them from learning what they could have learnt.

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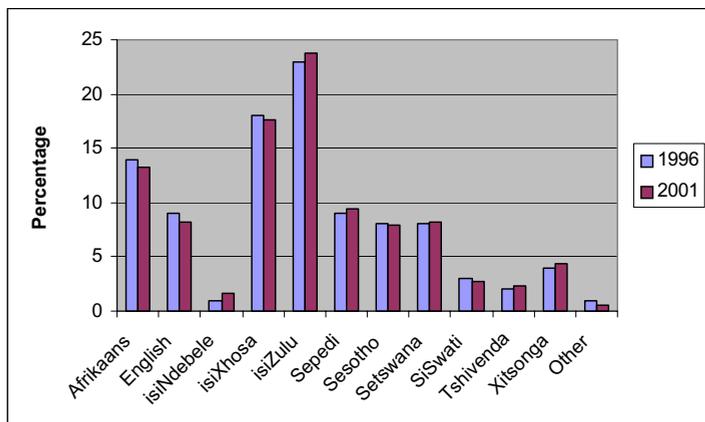
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Appendices

A. Home languages



Home languages in South Africa by % of speakers from Census figures in 1996 and 2001
(Source: based on 1996 and 2001 Census results)

B. Sample of interview guides

INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

This interview guide is for teachers in the various classrooms visited and observed.

Section A

1. Name
2. Position
3. Department
4. Region
5. Your mother tongue/home language
6. Educational level/teacher training
7. Special training (e.g., special training in languages)

Section B: Languages used

1. What are the main mother tongue(s) spoken in this region?
2. Does any of the teaching staff speak this/these language(s)?
If yes list languages and how many speak them?
3. Do you speak this/these language(s)?
If yes list languages.
4. What language do you use outside of the classroom/school in your daily life?
5. How would you describe the language competence of the primary teachers in your school in the language used as the medium of instruction (i.e. Xhosa)?
6. How would you describe the language competence of the primary teachers to use English as the medium of instruction beyond grade 3?
7. How capable do you think the teachers are in using the language(s) of instruction in your school?
8. Do you think teachers have a problem teaching through the medium of instruction in your school (in mother tongue grades 1-3 and in English after grade 3)?

Section C: Language teaching aids/curriculum materials

1. Have teaching materials been developed for the (Xhosa) language for use at the primary level, grades 1-3?
If so what types of materials are they and are they adequate for use in the classroom?
2. Are there other materials, which you would like to see, developed and produced for your classroom?
If so what?
3. Have teaching aids/curriculum materials been produced in other languages (i.e. the other African languages) for use at the primary level, grades 1-3?
If so what types of materials are they and are they adequate for use in the classroom?
4. Do you think you and other teachers have received sufficient training in the use of Xhosa and English as the medium of instruction?

Section D: Students competence

1. How would you describe the language competence of your students?
2. Is there any special assistance given to students who have difficulties with the language of instruction?

If so what type and by whom?

3. Do you think that the Xhosa language should be developed further for use at higher levels of education?

If so what levels and why?

Do you think students/society would benefit from this?

4. What are (if any) the overall problems faced by students using Xhosa and English language as the medium of instruction?
5. How well do the students understand what goes on in the classroom?
6. Is student interaction in the classroom encouraged?
7. What is the attitude of the students towards Xhosa and English as the language of instruction in your school?

Section E: General implementation

1. Are there any difficulties you face in using Xhosa and English as the language of instruction in your classroom (specify)?
2. What would facilitate the implementation of the language policy?
3. What is the attitude of the parents towards the use of vernacular languages as the medium of instruction for their children?
4. Are the parents able to assist their children with their schoolwork using the Xhosa and English language as the language of instruction?
5. Who were responsible for the selection of the medium of instruction in your school?
6. Were there any other persons involved in the selection of the language(s) of instruction in your school?
7. Are there any major obstacles you face in the implementation of the educational language policy?

If so what are they and why are they a problem?

8. How would you wish to see the educational language policy?
9. Is there anything you would like to add about the language in education policy in South Africa?

INTERVIEW GUIDE 2

This interview guide is for students in the various classrooms visited and observed.

Section A

1. Name
2. Grade
3. Mother tongue/home language
4. Parent's/guardian's mother tongue
5. Region

Section B: Languages used

1. What is/are the main mother tongue (language/s) spoken in this region?
2. Do you speak this/these language(s)?
If yes list languages.
3. Do your parents speak this/these language(s)?
If yes list languages.
4. How would you describe your teacher's language ability in the language used as the medium of instruction?
5. How capable do you think the teachers are in using the language(s) of instruction in your school?
6. Do you think teachers have a problem teaching through the medium of instruction in your school?

Section C: Language teaching aids/curriculum materials

1. What do you think of the teaching materials used for the Xhosa and English language for use in your school?
Do you think they are adequate (good) for use in the classroom?
2. Are there other materials, which you would like to have for your classroom?
If so what?
3. Do you ever use teaching aids/curriculum materials produce in other languages (Afrikaans or the other African languages) for use in your school/classroom?
If so what types of materials are they and why do you need to use them?
4. Do you think your teacher and other teachers in your school are well trained in the use of Xhosa and English as the medium of instruction?

Section D: Students competence and miscellaneous questions

1. Do you have any problems using the **Xhosa and English** language as the medium of instruction?
2. Do any of your classmates have problems with the language of instruction?
3. Do students who have difficulty with the language of instruction receive any special help?
If so what type and by whom?
4. How well do you understand what goes on in the classroom?
5. Are the students active in the classroom/do they ask many questions and are they asked to answer questions by the teacher?

6. What do you think about Xhosa and English as the language of instruction in your school?
7. How would you describe your ability to use the Xhosa and English language used as the medium of instruction?
8. Do you use Xhosa and/or English language outside of school?

If so what do you use it for?

Is the language used in television, radio or music (particularly pop music for young people)?

9. Are there reading materials available in your school language (Xhosa) outside of the classroom e.g., newspapers, magazines, books, etc.?

10. Do you think the Xhosa and English language will be useful to you in the future?

If so how?

11. Would you like to be able to learn using the Xhosa language throughout the rest of your education?

12. Would you prefer to use another language in the classroom besides the one chosen as the language of instruction?

If so which one and why?

13. Are your parents (or anyone at home) able to help you with your schoolwork using the language, which is the language of instruction in your school/classroom?

If not, do you think if you were able to learn using another language your parents (or someone at home) could help you with your schoolwork?

14. Were you asked about your home language or what language you might want to use in school or do you know anyone who was involved in this decision?

Who?

15. What language do you use with your friends?

16. What language do you use with your family?

17. Which language would you prefer to have as a language of instruction in school?

Up to what grade and why? (Note- although question 12 and 17 are similar I will keep both in order to see if there is any difference in the answers given).

C. Reading comprehension task (English version)

Instruction sheet for comprehension task

November, 2001

Before you start the activity fill out the following information below.

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Grade: _____

Age: _____

Home language: _____

Gender: Girl / Boy

School: _____

1. Look at the picture.



2. Now read the story and answer the questions.

Mr Dakile wanted a dog so he went out and bought a young puppy. It was a very friendly dog. It had long hair and was very dirty. He called it Muddy.

Mrs Dakile did not like Muddy very much. She did not want him in the house. She wanted him to stay in the garden. But Muddy was very good at getting into the house. He watched the back door and when someone left it open he came straight in.

‘This dog makes my floors dirty,’ Mrs Dakile said. ‘He is a lot of trouble. He will have to go.’

One day Muddy got into the house. He went into John’s room and found his school shoes. He chewed and chewed them.

John was very angry. ‘This dog has ruined my shoes,’ he said. ‘He is a lot of trouble. He will have to go.’

Another day it was raining. Muddy did not like it in the garden so he got into the house again. He went into Sizi’s bedroom and lay on her bed and went to sleep. He made the bed very wet.

Sizi was very angry. ‘This dog has made my bed wet,’ she said. ‘He is a lot of trouble. He will have to go.’

Mrs Dakile, John and Sizi all told Mr Dakile to take the dog away. But Mr Dakile liked Muddy and did not want him to go.

Then one night, when the Dakile family were sleeping, a burglar tried to break into the house. Muddy made a lot of noise. He barked and barked. Mr Dakile got up and caught the burglar. He took him to the police station.

‘Muddy is very clever. He is a good guard dog,’ Mr Dakile told the rest of the family. ‘He is staying.’

Answer the following questions.

1. Who bought the dog?
 - a. Mrs Dakile
 - b. Mr Dakile

- c. Sizi
 - d. John
2. Who did not like the dog?
- a. Everyone
 - b. Only Mrs Dakile
 - c. Mr Dakile
 - d. Mrs Dakile and the two children
3. How did the dog get into the house?
- a. Through the front door
 - b. Through the back door
 - c. Through the window
 - d. Through the garden
4. Why did Mrs Dakile want the dog to stay in the garden?

5. Why was John angry with Muddy?

6. Why was Sizi angry with Muddy?

7. What happened when the Dakile family was sleeping?

8. Who caught the burglar?
- a. Muddy
 - b. Mr Dakile
 - c. Mrs Dakile
 - d. A police officer

9. What is the best title for the story?
- a. A clever guard dog
 - b. A burglar
 - c. The Dakile family
 - d. A dirty dog
10. Choose the two words that best describe the dog.
- a. large
 - b. clean
 - c. naughty
 - d. clever
 - e. old

D. Reading comprehension task (Xhosa version)

Iphepha Lemiyalelo

November, 2001

Kukho imifanekiso emithandathu kwimvulophu yakho. Phambi kokuba uqale lo msebenzi, fakelela ezi nkukacha zilandelayo:

Igama: _____ Ifani: _____

Ibanga : _____

Iminyaka/Ubudala: _____

Ulwimi oluthethayo: _____

Isini: Intombi / Inkwenkwe

Isikolo: _____

1. Jonga emfanekisweni



2. Ngoku funda ibali, uze uphendule imibuzo.

UMnumzana Dakile wayefuna inja, waza ke ngoko wahamba waya kuthenga injana encinci. Le njana yayinobubele kakhulu. Yayinoboya obude, kwaye ingcolile. Wayithiya igama lokuba nguMuddy.

UNKosikazi Dakile wayengamthandi kakhulu uMuddy. Wayengafuni ukuba abe sendlwini. Wayefuna ahlale egadini. Kodwa uMuddy wayekuthanda ukungena endlwini. Wayejonga ucango lwangasemva, aze athi xa kukho othe walushiya lungavalwanga, angene ngqo endlwini.

‘Le nja ingcolisa imigangatho yam,’ watsho uNkosikazi Dakile. ‘Uyinkathazo enkulu. Kuza kufuneka ehambile apha.’

Ngenye imini uMuddy wangena endlwini. Waya egumbini likaJohn wafumana izihlangu zakhe zesikolo. Wazihlafuna, wazihlafunisisa.

UJohn wayenomsindo kakhulu. ‘Le nja izonakalisile izihlangu zam,’ watsho. Uyinkathazo enkulu. Kufuneka ehambile.’

Ngenye imini kwakusina. UMuddy akazange onwabe egadini,

waza ke ngoko wangena endlwini kwakhona. Waya kwigumbi lokulala likaSizi, wangqengqa ebhedini, waze wabiwa bubuthongo walala. Wayimanzisa xo ibhedi.

USizi wayenomsindo kakhulu. ‘Le nja iyimanzisile ibhedi yam,’ watsho. ‘Uyinkathazo enkulu. Kufuneka ehambile.’

UNKosikazi Dakile, uJohn noSizi, bebonke baxelela uMnumzana Dakile ukuba ahambise inja. Kodwa uMnumzana Dakile wayemthanda uMuddy, kwaye wayengafuni ukuba ahambe.

Kwathi ngobunye ubusuku, xa usapho lakwaDakile lwalulele, umqhekezi wazama ukuqhekeza endlwini. UMuddy wenza ingxolo enkulu. Wakhonkotha, wakhonkotha. UMnumzana uDakile wavuka waze wambamba umqhekezi. Wamthatha wamsa kwisikhululo samapolisa.

‘UMuddy ukrele-krele kakhulu. Uyinja engumalusi olungileyo,’ uMnumzana Dakile waluxelela njalo usapho. ‘Uyahhlala, akahambi.’

Khetha impendulo efanelekileyo.

1. Ngubani owathengainja?
 - a. nguNkosikazi Dakile
 - b. nguMumzana Dakile
 - c. nguSizi
 - d. nguJohn

2. Ngubani owayengayithandiinja?
 - a. Wonke umntu
 - b. NguNkosikazi Dakile kuphela
 - c. NguMnumzana Dakile kuphela
 - d. NguNkosikazi Dakile nabantwana ababini

3. Yayingena njaniinja endlwini?
 - a. Kumnyango wangaphambili
 - b. Kumnyango wangasemva
 - c. Ngefestile
 - d. Ngegadi

4. Kwakutheni uNkosikazi Dakile afune ukubainja ihlale egadini?

5. Kwakutheni uJohn enomsindo kuMuddy?

6. Kwakutheni uSizi enomsindo kuMuddy?

7. Kwenzeka ntoni xa usapho lakwaDakile lwalulele?

8. Ngubani owabamba umqhekezi?
 - a. NguMuddy
 - b. NguMnumzana Dakile
 - c. NguNkosikazi Dakile
 - d. Lipolisa

9. Sesiphi esona sihloko sifanele eli bali?

- a. Inja engumalusi okrele-krele
- b. Umqhekezi
- c. Usapho lakwaDakile
- d. Inja engcolileyo

10. Khetha amagama amabini achaza ngokugqibelelyoinja.

- a. enkulu
- b. ecocekileyo
- c. enenkathazo
- d. ekrele-krele
- e. endala

F. Handout of mathematics lesson

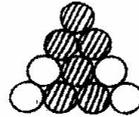
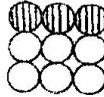
SAILI SCHOOL : _____
 GRADE 4 MATHEMATICS NOV 99
 FIRST NAME _____ SURNAME _____
 DATE OF BIRTH _____ GENDER : BOY / GIRL

SECTION COMMON FRACTIONS 10 MARKS

Complete the table.

FIGURE	INTO HOW MANY EQUAL PARTS IS THE SHAPE DIVIDED	WHAT FRACTION IS COLOURED IN ?	WHAT FRACTION IS NOT COLOURED IN ?
A	15		
B		$\frac{3}{4}$	
C			$\frac{6}{10}$

***4. [2]



Shade the following fractions

A one seventh



B one eighth



[2]

Bonga has to share 6 fat cakes amongst 4 friends.
 How many fat cakes will each friend get ?

[2]

F. English version of letter to parents for LOITASA project



University of the Western Cape

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02 December 2002

Dear Parents

As you know, African Languages have not been used as languages of instruction after Grade 3. This seems to have an impact on children's academic performance and success in schools. Research conducted by educationists and linguists shows that learning through a foreign language, without the fundamental support of the learners' mother tongue, puts learners at a disadvantage in their learning. The reason is that children learn through foreign languages which they do not understand very well, and which are not spoken in their homes, and therefore fail to express their views clearly in most cases. This leads to poor academic performance by these learners compared to those who are allowed to respond in their mother tongues.

To rescue this situation, a group of academics from the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, led by Professor Zubeida Desai, are trying to promote the use of the learners' mother tongue in certain subjects in some schools. This will be done through research that will be conducted, only if permission is granted by the parents, teachers and learners of this school. The aim of this research is to investigate whether the learners' academic performance can improve when they learn through the medium of their mother tongue. This is therefore an attempt to promote the use of isiXhosa to teach Science and Geography from Grade 4, since Grade 4 marks the start of the use of a second language as a medium of instruction.

According to plans, this research will take three years, from 2003 to 2005. This means that learners will participate in this research from Grade 4 to Grade 6. At the end of 2003 this project will be evaluated so that weaknesses can be improved. Those learners who will be taught Science and Geography through the medium of isiXhosa will receive English and Xhosa learner-support materials free of charge. Those who will be taught through the English medium will receive English materials free of charge as well, and these two groups will be given support as much as possible by the proponents of this research and by other education experts in these two subjects. Teachers will also be supported in their work so that they can cope with this situation.

This group would like to get permission and support from parents, teachers and learners in order to achieve their goals. Therefore, you are kindly requested as parents to show your

decision by completing the form attached to this letter, and sending it to school before 9 December 2002.

We will appreciate your support.

Yours faithfully

Professor Z. Desai
(Co-ordinator)

Professor Mbulelo Jokweni

Ms Vuyokazi Nomlomo

FORM TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS

**PLEASE NOTE: PUT THIS SIGN (X) TO SHOW YOUR DECISION
NEXT TO THE BLOCK THAT INDICATES WHETHER YOU AGREE
OR DISAGREE.**

I

agree	
disagree	

**that my childbe taught Science and Geography
through the medium of Xhosa.**

Signature:.....

Typographical and other corrections made to the original manuscript

Throughout the dissertation the author has corrected punctuation mistakes and other typographical errors found in the original manuscript that was delivered to the dissertation committee. The committee members will receive a detailed account of the corrections made.

