RESPONSE TO MULTILINGUALISM:
LANGUAGE SUPPORT
IN A WESTERN CAPE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Multilingualism has always been a feature of South African education. It is only in recent years that a particular form of linguistic diversity has become unmanageable for schools implementing the official English/Afrikaans bilingual model associated with the previous regime. The desegregation of schooling on the Cape Flats is the result of the exodus of African-language speakers from the impoverished schooling provided by the former Department of Education and Training. A closely allied reason for the migration to English-medium and English/Afrikaans medium schools is the demand for access to English, which is perceived to be the language of power and status in South African society at present.

The subject of this study is a remedial language enrichment or support programme instituted as a response to multilingualism in the junior primary section in a parallel medium primary school in the Western Cape. School X has attempted to overcome the obvious communication gap existing between English/Afrikaans-speaking teachers and first-language (L1) Xhosa-speaking learners by enlisting the services of a departmental team of itinerant Speech & Hearing specialists. The English/Afrikaans Language Support Programme (LSP) is described in terms of its origins in remedial first-language support, approaches to early second-language development, and its curriculum. Attention is given to withdrawal groups as well as to whole-class listening skills lessons, before an attempt is made to typologise the programme. The main finding of this study is that second-language support of the type provided by the LSP is wholly inappropriate in a context in which the majority of learners do not understand the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), and constitutes at best a weak form of education for bi/multilingualism within a paradigm of societal assimilation.

ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
BC	Black Consciousness
BICS	basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP	cognitive/academic language proficiency
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CER	Community Education Resources
CNE	Christian National Education
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CUMSA	A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
DE	Department of Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
DSBO	Diploma in Spesiale en Buitengewone Onderwys
ECCSA	Education Co-ordinating Council of South Africa
ECD	early childhood development
ESL	English as a Second Language
GNU	Government of National Unity
HC	historically-`coloured'
HoA	House of Assembly
HoR	House of Representatives
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HW	historically-`white'
JP	junior primary
L1, L2, L3	first language, second language, third language
LANGED	Language in Education subcommittee of LANGTAG
LANGTAG	Language Plan Task Group
LaS	language as a subject
LAS	Language Assistance Service
LEP	limited English proficient
LoLT/s	language/s of learning and teaching
LoTL	language of teaching and learning

LSP	Language Support Programme
MoI/MOI	medium of instruction
NECC	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NLP	National Language Project
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OFS	Orange Free State
PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
PTR	pupil-teacher ratio
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RP	Received Pronunciation
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACHED	South African Committee for Higher Education
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SASM	South African Students' Movement
SHS	Speech and Hearing Services
SYPP	Six Year Primary Project
TESOL	Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US(A)	United States (of America)
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CONTENTS

Chapter 1   SETTING THE SCENE: ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

1.1. Education indicators

Education is a telling indicator of poverty in South Africa. Almost 95% of all the poor in South Africa are `African' (RDP 1995:3), the victims and survivors of apartheid-capitalism. Over half of the poor have either no formal education or have failed to complete primary education (ibid), joining the ranks of the `out-of-school' youth. Almost two-thirds of the wealthiest 20% of the population, on the other hand, have completed at least secondary education. These facts are clear predictors of access to jobs and differential incomes between rich and poor (ibid). Relevant indicators of educational inequality include the following:

- In 1994 over 4 million Africans had junior primary (Sub A - Std 1) as their highest educational level (SAIRR 1996:96)
- Literacy: despite a rise from 50% to 85% in the proportion of African children attending school since 1976, the number of Africans passing matric had dropped from 90% to 40% of those who started school (ibid:98)
- Poverty = being uneducated. In 1993, 68.3% of household heads who had no education lived in poverty, while only 2.2% of household heads who had completed university education lived in poverty (ibid:99)
- Poor quality of many African schools: hence the high repetition rates in Sub A and standards 8,9,10, causing `over-enrolment' in these grades (ibid:116)
- Pupil/teacher ratio (PTR): the average PTR for `Africans' in primary school in 1995 was 43:1, for `coloureds' and `Indians' 27:1, for `whites' 23:1. It is necessary to add 6 pupils to each PTR for non-teaching staff in order to arrive at actual pupil numbers per class (ibid:123).

Economically speaking, the significance of figures like these is that

> given great differences in the quality of education available to different income and racial groups, the differences in future income-earning opportunities are likely to be much wider than those suggested by the enrolment data.
> (RDP 1995:21)

Educationally speaking, they help explain the middle-class exodus from former Department of Education and Training (ex-DET) schools into the better-resourced schools of the former tricameral system. Poor quality schooling has led to high drop-out rates and a bleak economic future. For the minority, the hope of a better education and hence an escape from poverty is ineluctably linked not only to enrolment in historically `white' or

historically 'coloured' schools, but also to proficiency in English. For the majority who are crammed into overcrowded peri-urban and rural schools, maximal exposure to English is deemed to be a way out. We will be forced to return repeatedly to this theme.

1.2. Desegregation of schooling

The policy framework sketched in Chapter 4 has interacted with "realities on the ground" in schools in increasingly complex ways. A development pertinent to this thesis is the gradual desegregation of schooling, particularly after the eruptions of Soweto in 1976 which signalled the bankruptcy of existing state schooling for 'Africans'.

The beginnings of desegregated schooling in South Africa go back some twenty years. From as early as January 1976 when 'white' convent schools first admitted black students, Catholic and other private schools began to actively challenge apartheid education legislation (Christie 1990:1)[1]. Gradually the open schools increased their black enrolment, although numbers remained small overall[2]. As Christie shows, the open schools movement gradually helped prise open the canned racial divisions that characterised not only the education system, but the whole of apartheid-capitalist society. Admittedly the private schools did so on their own terms, and without ever fundamentally questioning the segregated nature of the system or the privileged position of Catholic schools within it (ibid:29). As such the open schools movement constituted no more than "a concerted reform initiative" (ibid). Given the small numbers of students involved, and the nature of the system into which they were effectively assimilated, the open schools movement could never develop into a mass movement for educational change (ibid:38). Nevertheless the Private Schools Act of 1986 signified the state's recognition and subsidisation, albeit reluctant, of open schools in South Africa (Christie 1990:29).

A much slower, initially clandestine and certainly unofficial process of desegregation took place in government schools over this period. Figures are difficult to obtain, given the initially subversive nature of the process. However, results of a Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) survey in 1993 confirm a growing enrolment of African-language speakers in historically-'coloured' (HC) schools in the Western Cape. According to the survey, the number of Xhosa-speakers in 26 English-medium and/or Afrikaans-medium HC primary schools totalled 1669 (TLSA:2) - an average of 64 per school. The total for 19 secondary schools was 904 (ibid) (average 47.6 per school). While the numbers appear

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[1]Christie, Pam 1990 *Open Schools. Racially Mixed Catholic Schools in South Africa, 1976-1986.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
[2]By 1986 most of the open schools were still largely 'white' in both staff and student composition (Christie 1990:36). In the 42 Catholic secondary open schools, for example, the enrolment of Black (i.e. 'African', 'coloured', 'Indian' and 'Chinese') students totalled a mere 15.4% at a time when Black people constituted 86% of the South African population (ibid).

small, they have almost certainly increased dramatically since 1993[3]. This is especially the case in the English-medium schools and streams (in the case of parallel-medium schools).

It would be reasonable to expect that formal deracialisation and the amalgamation of the formerly separate education departments in 1994/95 would have dramatically accelerated the influx of African-language speakers into formerly English-only or English/Afrikaans medium schools, making the seeking of answers to pressing questions of linguistic diversity ever more urgent. We shall return to this issue in the last chapter.

1.3. Escape from DET: reasons

A major reason for the influx of African-language speakers into formerly exclusively `white' and `coloured' schools is the low quality of schooling and the poor educational results attained by students in institutions of the crisis-prone former Department of Education and Training.

> Black parents, in sending their children to ex-Model C schools, are buying into a system that is seen to have produced significant benefits for whites under apartheid. Perhaps the parents are reluctant to start monkeying around with an obviously successful formula when for the first time black children are in a position to get that same good solid start that white children are perceived to have got.
> (Crawford 1996:29)

Language has played a significant part in students' difficulties. In their succinct study of language policy options for schools in a post-apartheid South Africa, King & Van den Berg (1992) identify the transition from first-language to English-medium LoLT as the major problem facing primary schools for `Africans'. Pointing to the high drop-out rate from such schools, King & Van den Berg identify two "stages of attrition": at the end of Sub A, and at the end of Std 3. Unsurprisingly, both are identified as being language-related (1992:28) - a conclusion confirmed by Macdonald's (1990) research findings of a debilitating "deep-end" language medium change. English is identified as a barrier to learning; and the junior primary syllabus requirements of three compulsory languages-as-subjects (L1 plus English plus Afrikaans) are rightly lambasted as "a learning load without precedent" (ibid:30). The transition to Std 3 becomes particularly problematical with the range of new content subjects that are offered through the medium of English, formerly only taught as a subject. The new textbooks effectively require a 1000% increase in English vocabulary from pupils, who see no alternative but to resort to rote-learning and to depending heavily

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[3] For example, one of the English-medium schools mentioned in the survey, Rosmead Central Primary in Claremont, has close on 90% Xhosa-speakers in one of its Grade 1 classes. Clearly the magnitude of the task facing teachers in such schools is increasing exponentially.

on the teacher (ibid:31). Small wonder, then, that the language factor constitutes the main cause of failure at Std 10 level (ibid:32).

A closely related reason for parents' taking their children out of DET schools and enrolling them in English-medium institutions wherever they can is the lure of English. Specifically, `straight-for-English' programmes[4] hold an attraction for parents who have seen their children struggle with English in the DET schools where the environment is not conducive to the learning of what is effectively a foreign language for many[5]. In a recent article, Crawford highlights some of the contradictions in Model-C type (i.e. historically `white') classrooms and schools that have begun admitting black students for the first time, and the tensions experienced by teachers who do not know the home languages of the new students that have to be accommodated.

> The new multilingual classrooms, however, would seem to require a greater degree of flexibility from the teacher and willingness to negotiate power than previously, if only because the teacher is very often not able to understand or speak all the languages of her pupils. (Crawford 1996:28)

Crawford argues strongly in favour of a whole-school approach to change in which parents "must be included as the significant but often absent guests at the feast" (1996:29). She illustrates the point with the following anecdote that bears an uncanny resemblance to an occurrence at School X[6]. In the incident in question, African-language speaking parents rejected the appointment of `African' teachers in favour of `white' teachers in an ex-Model C school.

> A contributing factor must also be the very poor reputation of the ex-DET schools which may have prejudiced parents against employing black teachers who are perceived to be less well-trained and less reliable than their white counterparts. And once more the consciousness factor: parents are very often making great sacrifices to equip their children with a *foolproof* English education and are not aware that the neglect of their children's first language in favour of English is associated with negative effects on children's cognitive development and self-esteem. In the majority of cases the children who consistently underachieve in these schools are those whose first language is not English. (Crawford 1996:29)

These few sentences capture the apparent realism of parental perceptions and, simultaneously, the tragedy of uninformed parental choice regarding language issues. In a public sphere dominated by English, meaningful access to the language becomes a non-negotiable demand of those hitherto excluded from economic security and positions of power. On the other hand, the lack of information publicly available on the educational issues of language development leads to fateful choices and further wastage of human

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[4] See discussion of submersion and immersion programmes in 3.4.1. above.
[5] This point is also made in the TLSA survey.
[6] See Chapter 4

potential. The need for language awareness campaigns coupled with the raising of the status of the African languages, as envisaged by the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG, 1996), has never been greater or more urgent. The above anecdote also underscores the need for schools to make decisive moves towards anti-racist education. As Crawford says, "in a racist society, unless a decisive and conscious break is made with past practice, racist practices will inevitably continue under the cover of the need for *excellent English language skills*" (1996:29).

1.4. Language gaps

In light of the above, the following results of the TLSA survey come as no surprise. Xhosa-speakers experienced great difficulty in classroom communication, although less so if they have come through an English-medium pre-primary school. Xhosa-speaking children were slower to respond to questions. While teachers were positive in their attitudes towards Xhosa-speakers, they were also frustrated at the slower pace they were forced to maintain, particularly in the area of writing where Xhosa-speakers were weakest. "The lack of insight into the subject matter is a direct result of the language difficulty rather than a lack of academic ability" (TLSA 1993:11). These difficulties are aptly summed up thus:

> The inability of teachers and Xhosa speakers to communicate effectively with one another leads to a situation in which both teachers and learners feel insecure, inadequate and frustrated. (ibid:12)

A more wide-ranging overview of the difficult, even desperate situation in many Western Cape schools is offered below:

> ... schools are on the whole not in a position to deal adequately with the increasingly multilingual composition of their learners. English-medium and dual or parallel English/Afrikaans medium schools cater for Xhosa-speaking learners on their own terms. Learners are immersed in English, and receive little or no home-language maintenance: Xhosa is often not taught as a subject, and does not feature as a LoLT. Teachers are unable to communicate in Xhosa, and learners understand little English or Afrikaans. Textbooks and visual teaching aids such as posters and charts are in English or Afrikaans only, and in many cases reflect an inappropriate and eurocentric monoculturalism. Approaches to initial literacy learning are outdated and ineffective.
> Frustrated by the evident communication difficulties, teachers frequently see Xhosa-speakers as "the problem" and lay the blame for the educational disaster at the feet of a system that has allowed this type of situation to develop, and at the feet of parents who fail to support their children's schooling except in a financial sense (and in some instances even this is lacking). As a consequence, teachers' attitudes towards Xhosa-speakers are often laced with bitterness. Disciplinary problems occur as a result of a breakdown in communication. Xhosa speakers' self-image suffers, and learning proceeds at a an excruciatingly slow pace, leading to pressure on successive grades. Often Xhosa-speaking children repeat a grade once, or even twice, and often this is seen as being necessary for their own good. In addition,

Xhosa speaking children are frequently seen as having learning problems. An inability to cope with English as LoLT is addressed through "remedial" measures. Frequently these children are referred to the remedial teacher, in other cases to languages specialists who in the past have dealt with children's "learning difficulties" in the first language (Afrikaans or English) and who are subsequently brought in to assist with "second language problems".

It is important to emphasise that many teachers are working under extremely difficult conditions for which their training and experience have not prepared them. Large classes, the tensions of rationalisation/ retrenchment/ redeployment, changes in curriculum, as well as language issues have impacted at the same time, creating a situation which for many is traumatic.
(Bloch et al 1996:3-4)

Trends such as those observed above have clear implications for teacher education in South Africa. In particular, both pre-service and especially the vast numbers of in-service teachers in public schools will have to be equipped with the wherewithal for coping in multilingual classrooms. This is especially crucial as the formal desegregation of all formerly segregated state schools in 1995 (SAIRR 1996:115) has not been accompanied by a concomitant desegregation or redeployment of teaching staff. Where such redeployment of teachers was envisaged, as in the Western Cape, it has caused widespread resistance amongst rank-and-file teachers. Given the already large and unwieldy classes and the uncertainty associated with having to adapt to "a changing multicultural teaching environment", it is not surprising to hear that teachers have one of the highest average stress levels of any professional group in South Africa (ibid:116).

1.5. Teachers' views

The lure of English has also found expression at classroom level. Students and teachers grow up believing "English is better" than Afrikaans or Xhosa, only to discover that it is a "stumbling block" causing many children to fail at the first hurdle (De Klerk 1995a). Xhosa-speaking parents take their children out of Xhosa-medium schools, where a "stigma still exists" (1996:10), and take their children "to Bishopscourt and private schools" (ibid). As a result children are "limited in their own language" (ibid). Antiquated teaching methods and the unfamiliarity of taught varieties of the first language (Afrikaans; Xhosa) contribute to children's academic failure in their own language.

These attitudes are well illustrated in a survey done under the aegis of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) in 1991 into teachers' opinions of language policy and practice in 'African' primary schools (i.e. DET or -equivalent). In her analysis of the NEPI data, Bot found that in schools which switch from an African language to English medium teaching after Std 2, teachers

were most often unhappy with the language policy, and while almost five out of every ten teachers would prefer another language as MOI [medium of instruction], over six out of ten would like to use two or more languages in class. (Bot 1993:8).

The latter finding appears to represent a strong endorsement of some form of bilingual education on the part of (ex-) DET teachers. Bot suggests, rightly, that the reasons have to do with the fact that for the majority of teachers and students, the MOI (LoLT) from Std 3 onwards is not the home language; in addition, classrooms are multilingual in terms of the aggregate of students' home languages. Curiously, however,

> Although a clear majority of these teachers said that they spoke the MOI [i.e. English] fluently and their students used it comfortably, eight out of ten teachers nevertheless felt that the majority of their students would do better if the MOI were their home language, and four out of ten thought the majority of their students would do better academically if examinations were written in their home language.

Bot cautions that these views "cannot be interpreted as support among these teachers for using the mother tongue as MOI" (ibid:8), as teachers by and large rejected any increased use of the mother tongue in the curriculum. The apparent contradiction is that teachers are forced to recognise that learning is best facilitated through the medium of the home language, yet they reject the use of the home language beyond the prescribed minimum period. The contradictory views are clearly a function of the hegemony of English. Due to educational pressures, teachers desperately want to come across as confident users of English and effective teachers in a medium in which students have to write all their exams from senior primary school upwards.

A similar degree of implicit support for bilingual teaching approaches came from teachers in Afrikaans-medium HoR (HC) schools, in which 60% of teachers would like to use two or more languages of teaching in the class (ibid:8). This finding is contradicted by the sample as a whole, of whom 75% favoured retention of existing language policies in schools. Most teachers (80%) supported the idea that any switch to another language medium should be made before standard 2. A clear majority would like to see English as LoLT throughout primary school. On the other hand, 69% said that students should learn to read and write in their L1. Again, the pressures of producing results in English are in direct conflict with teachers' intuitions that a substantial portion of teaching should take place in two languages. Small wonder, then, that many teachers, parents and students have, in the words of one teacher, become "slaves of English" (De Klerk 1995a).

1.6. The need for language support

In view of the above, many HC and historically-`white' (HW) schools have instituted a range of programmes designed to assist (mostly) speakers of African languages adapt to

the demands of the (mostly English-medium) curriculum. These compensatory measures typically include bridging classes, extra lessons, and language support programmes. In Chapters 6-8 one such programme is described and located within the particular context of the Western Cape. The intention was not primarily to evaluate or assess the merits of its implementation, but to examine the programme in terms of its own assumptions about language development and to measure these against current theories and practices elsewhere. While every effort has been made to be non-judgmental, it is in the very nature of research that evaluative comments cannot be avoided. Research is not a neutral activity, but an *interested* enquiry.

> Learning a language is like baking a chocolate cake. If a recipe requires that you
> bake a cake at 250° for one hour, it cannot be baked at 500° for half an hour with
> successful results. It will be burnt on the outside and raw in the middle. Similarly,
> submersing language minority children in a second language, which is what happens
> in South Africa, results in them being burnt in the classroom, and raw in the sense
> that they are not learning either their first or second language successfully.
> Furthermore, they are not able to develop skills in the content subjects either.
>   - *J David Ramirez*[7]

The view informing this chapter, and the minithesis as a whole, is that theory and practice
stand in a dialectical relationship[8] to one another: the one cannot meaningfully exist
without the other. Theory needs practice to test and modify its assumptions. Practice, on
the other hand, is equally in need of theory. Without recourse to a more systematic body
of ideas, practice runs the risk of simply perpetuating the status quo, of not being
challenged, of not having its assumptions exposed and thereby made amenable to
change.

Against this background, a demonstration of familiarity with some relevant texts in the
form of the following literature review has the modest aim of establishing a framework
within which to explore the case study discussed in subsequent chapters. The chapter is
divided into two main parts:
   ♦ definitions of some key concepts;
   ♦ a discussion of the cognitive/ linguistic basis for second language acquisition and
     bilingualism;

2.1. Definitions
2.1.1. First language, mother tongue, home language

By *first language* (L1) is meant the language "one has learned first and identifies with"
(Skuttnab-Kangas 1988:18) and knows best (NEPI 1992:xi). It is the language in which an
individual conducts most of her or his important personal relationships, and is usually
acquired first because it was spoken by significant others around the individual when s/he
was learning to talk (Siguan & Mackey 1987:22). The first language is usually the primary
vehicle for cognitive development.

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[7] In Heugh 1994:8
[8] See McLellan's account of Engels' laws of the dialectic, one of which is 'the interpenetration of opposites'
(1978:11-12).

Terms that are used more or less synonymously by writers cited in this minithesis include vernacular, mother tongue, and home language. Despite being used by UNESCO in 1953, the term *vernacular* has fallen into disfavour in recent years due to perceived racist overtones (Heugh et al 1995:viii). *Mother tongue* is commonly used as a synonym (NEPI 1992:xi) but is frequently inaccurate because the father's first language is often the dominant one in the household (Heugh et al 1995:viii). *Home language* indicates the language used daily in the home and the language the parents would like their children to use (Alladina 1995:3). In bi- or multilingual homes, the plural form *home languages* may be more appropriate, as children may grow up knowing 2 or more languages equally well (Musker 1995:32). Within the school context the term *primary language* carries the advantage of referring to both the first (chronologically acquired) language as well as the language the child knows best especially in a context where the latter is not a home language but a language of the neighbourhood or immediate community (Heugh et al 1995:viii). However, *primary language* has the disadvantage of conceivably being confused with the language of the *primary school.* A related term such as *primary linguistic resource* (Desai & Trew 1992) usefully highlights the language-as-a-resource paradigm in terms of which a multiplicity of languages is viewed not as a problem but as a source of natural wealth. This term, too, has its drawbacks for perhaps sounding overly academic to teachers stressed out by daily experiences of language as a barrier to communication (the language-as-a-problem paradigm). A further term, that of *principal language* (Alexander 1996, personal communication), does not have widespread currency and is accordingly not used here.

For present purposes the signifiers *first language, L1, home language* and *mother tongue* have roughly the same signified and are used interchangeably. Where reference is made to language acquisition in school, *first language* or *L1* is preferred, in part to distinguish it more effectively from the *second language* or *L2*.

2.1.2. Language/s of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)

By this is meant the main medium of classroom communication used by the teacher. This term is preferred to *medium of instruction* (MoI) for sounding less authoritarian and transmission-mode in orientation, although the older term is still freely used by many writers cited here. *Language of learning and teaching* also "emphasises the importance of learning in the education process and makes provision for the language of teaching to be distinguished from the language of learning in multilingual classrooms and elsewhere where relevant" (Department of Education 1996:13-14).

2.1.3. Bilingualism and multilingualism

Individual bi- or multilingualism needs to be distinguished from societal bi- or multilingualism (Baker 1993:4-5). By *individual bi- or multilingualism* is meant "the ability to use two or more languages". This ability can range from initial proficiency in the second language to (Bloomfield's) native-like control over two languages (NEPI 1992:x), from minimal to maximal bilingualism (Baker 1993:7), although perfectly balanced bilingualism in individuals probably does not exist (Siguan & Mackey 1987:22). These definitions imply a sliding scale view of proficiency in two or more languages. The greater one's ability to use two or more languages, the more (fully) bi- or multilingual one is.

Societal bi- or multilingualism is used to refer to groups of bi- or multilingual people (ibid:7). A third use of the term bi- or multilingualism refers to the composition of *classrooms* in which the number of first or home languages spoken totals two or more. A relevant example would be a class in which the majority of children are monolingual English speakers, a minority of children are monolingual Xhosa speakers, and a few children plus the teacher are English/Afrikaans bilinguals (a typical ex-Model C classroom in Cape Town). In Gauteng township (ex-DET) schools, by comparison, the chances of having individual as well as classroom multilingualism are much higher than in the Western Cape (see Slabbert 1994:4-7). Such a situation is sometimes euphemistically termed one of *linguistic diversity* - euphemistic, because the formulation implies parity of status between the various languages. In practice, this is almost never the case[9].

2.1.4. Additive and subtractive bi-/multilingualism

The evolution of the terms *additive bilingualism* and *subtractive bilingualism* and *additive multilingualism* and *subtractive multilingualism*, respectively, is evidence of how factors other than linguistic ones help determine the discourse on language policy in education. This is of course not surprising, given the realisation that language policy and planning is a site of contestation since it involves the exercise of power (Tollefson 1991; Crawhall 1992; Alexander 1992; Heugh 1995a).

2.1.4.1. Canadian origins

For W E Lambert, *additive bilingualism* refers to the "process of developing bilingual and bicultural skills" in children who, "with no fear of ethnic/linguistic erosion, can add one or more foreign languages to their accumulating skills, and profit immensely from the experience, cognitively, socially and even economically" (1983:99-100). By definition such processes succeed in adding one or more language(s) (and cultures) to the repertoire of an individual or a group of people, with no loss to the home or first language. Lambert's

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[9] For my preferred use of terms, see 2.1.4.6. below.

definition arose in the context of the positive experience associated with French-immersion programmes for English-speaking children in the Francophone Canadian province of Quebec from the mid-1960s onwards[10]. In 1980 Lambert described additive bilingualism as a situation in which "the addition of a second language and culture are unlikely to replace or displace the first language and culture" (in Baker 1993:57). It is important to note that while Lambert's definition of additive bilingualism arose in the context of immersion programmes, additive bilingualism was more closely identified with language-learning and other beneficial cognitive *outcomes* in the learner, than with particular types of *programmes*.

Conversely, for Lambert, *subtractive* programmes are defined by the loss or erosion of a home or first language in a learner. Subtraction is often the outcome of *transitional* programmes which fail to maintain a learner's home or first language while replacing it with a second language as the main medium of teaching and learning. In the European and North American contexts, this typically happens when a minority language (immigrant or in-migrant) learner "enters a school where a high prestige, socially powerful, dominant language like English is introduced as the exclusive language of instruction", resulting in

> a steam-roller effect of the powerful dominant language [that] can make foreign home languages and cultures seem homely in contrast, ghosts in the closet to be eradicated and suppressed.
> (Lambert 1983:100)

2.1.4.2. Luckett

In South Africa the terms coined by Lambert have only recently entered the discourse on language in education policy. The first systematic use of the terms *additive bilingualism* and *subtractive bilingualism* was made by Kathy Luckett in a pathbreaking paper (1992, revised 1995) on a new language plan for schools. For Luckett,

> `Additive bilingualism' means the gaining of competence in a second language while the first language is maintained. This form of bilingualism can only develop in social contexts where both languages (and their cultures) are valued and reinforced. Most researchers are agreed that additive bilingualism usually has a positive effect on a child's social and cognitive development....
> (Luckett 1995:75)

In other words, additive bilingualism is a *form* of bilingualism that is defined in terms of a successful developmental *process* in which the language learning *outcome* in the individual is (full) bilingualism (i.e. proficiency in a second language while the first language is maintained), with attendant cognitive and social *benefits*. Thus Luckett's

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[10] See under 3.2.2.1. below.

definition focuses primarily on the language learning *process* and *outcomes* in an individual learner. Luckett follows Lambert in labelling the other form of bilingualism *subtractive*.

> `Subtractive bilingualism' occurs when a second language is learned at the expense of the child's first language. This often occurs when the first language is not valued and supported by the education system. It is likewise generally agreed that subtractive bilingualism has a negative effect on a child's social and cognitive development. (Luckett 1994:75)

According to this definition, subtractive bilingualism is
- a *form* of bilingualism
- a developmental and language learning *process*
- detrimental to a young language learner in its cognitive *effects*

This definition of *subtractive bilingualism* focuses primarily on the learning *process* and cognitive *effects* on an individual learner. What is missing is a clear description of the language learning *outcomes* of subtractive bilingualism.

I have no argument with the substance of Luckett's position. There is by now widespread agreement[11] that LoLT policies and classroom practices which replace the child's home or first language with a second language as the main medium of teaching and learning are likely to impact negatively on the child's educational performance and sense of wellbeing - particularly where the (replaced) first language has a low social status and the (usurping) second language has high status. And there is little doubt that this has indeed been the case for the majority of `African' children exposed to the crisis-riddled former DET.

My objection centres on the notion of *subtraction*. It is surely inaccurate to say that transitional or delayed immersion programmes that characterise ex-DET schools are *subtractive*. Admittedly a programme that fails to develop a learner's home language as a LoLT after grade 4 but continues with the home language as a subject, is unlikely to result in advanced bilingual proficiency or academic success. If cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP[12]) in the home language could not be developed, at least the learner is not likely to lose conversational fluency in her home language. Even in cases where a Xhosa-speaker is enrolled in an English-medium suburban school, for instance, and where no formal provision is made for Xhosa in the curriculum, the child is likely to retain basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS[13]) in Xhosa provided she hears and speaks enough Xhosa at home and in the community. The school may have *replaced* the

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[11] See research evidence summarised in the remainder of this chapter.
[12] Cf 2.2.1. below
[13] Cf 2.2.1. below

home language with English in the first example, and *submerged* the child in English in the second; but it is highly unlikely that the school would have succeeded in 'subtracting' any existing language proficiency from the learner.

Additive usefully describes a developmental language-learning *process*[14] in an individual which is closely associated with positive language-learning outcomes - specifically advanced proficiency in two or more languages in our context. For the average child the successful learning of a second language is *dependent upon* the maintenance and development of the home language, usually as a LoLT. Hence for most learners it would be difficult, even impossible, to learn a second language to an advanced level when the home or first language is not maintained and developed in the schooling process. Yet this is precisely the possibility left by Luckett's formulation that "'Subtractive bilingualism' occurs when a second language is learned at the expense of the child's first language". Most people *cannot* learn a second language at the expense of the first language. The formulation is self-contradictory, oxymoronic.

It would be more accurate to say that the *outcome* of programmes in which a second language is learned at the expense of a child's first language, is likely to be a *restricted* or *limited* (or partial or initial or static) bilingualism or bilingual proficiency. Thus we have programmes in which an *additive process* of language-learning leads to *advanced* bilingual proficiency as an *outcome*, and programmes in which *a non-additive process* of language-learning results in (at best) a *restricted* or *limited* bilingual *outcome*.

A general feature of Luckett's pair of definitions above is that they assume a very wide definition of (individual) bilingualism to the point where *bilingualism* is no longer viewed as a positive, desirable good in itself but is dependent on descriptors such as *additive* or *subtractive* to give it meaning. This contributes to an inflationary spiral of terms which is to some extent unavoidable if we take the view that individual bilingualism can range from limited to advanced proficiency. However, the insistence on the adjective *additive* ironically subtracts from the positive connotations of *bilingualism*, and also confuses language-learning processes with *programme types* and (less seriously) with language learning *outcomes*.

2.1.4.3. Heugh et al

Heugh et al (1995) refer to Lambert in their description of *additive bilingualism* as

> bilingualism associated with a well-developed proficiency in two languages and with positive cognitive outcomes (Lambert). The term is applied to a context in which

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[14] After all, addition in mathematics is a *process*.

speakers of any language are introduced to a second language (or even languages) in addition to the continued use of the primary language as a language of learning. The second language is never intended to replace the primary language in education; rather, it is seen as complementary to the primary language throughout. (1995:vii)

This definition of additive bilingualism
- implies that there is another form of bilingualism
- implies therefore that bilingualism *in and of itself* is not equal to advanced proficiency in two languages, thereby devaluing the concept of bilingualism and contributing to the inflationary spiral of terms mentioned earlier
- refers to an individual language learner's proficiency in two languages.

At this point there is a subtle shift as the definition of additive bilingualism is extended beyond Luckett's more narrow focus on individual language learning *processes and outcomes* to embrace also *certain types of language programmes*. Specifically, curricular programmes which run through the medium of two languages of learning and teaching of which the learner's primary language is one, are deemed to be additive bilingual programmes.

This subtle shift has potentially profound consequences. The advantage of the elision of difference between *outcome* and *programme* is that the one *is identified with* the other. Thus a programme that succeeds in adding another language to a learner's repertoire itself becomes an additive programme by association. This can be a useful shorthand way of referring to a complex phenomenon, and has a certain utility.

The twin dangers of this slight of word, however, are those of oversimplification and dogmatism. For it is surely an oversimplification to say that all programmes or LoLT/LaS (Language-as-a-Subject) packages that fit the above definition necessarily result in additive language learning processes in learners. It is not only conceivable but common for the same programme to facilitate additive language learning processes for some children, and non-additive language learning processes for other children. To avoid having to explain that the same programme can *be* both additive and non-additive at the same time, it may be more useful to say that it can result in additive processes and advanced bilingual outcomes in some learners, and in non-additive processes and limited bilingual outcomes in other learners.

A dogmatic insistence that only certain types of LoLT policies be termed *additive* (e.g. dual medium or parallel medium) may also foreclose the possibility that other programmes could be equally successful in promoting advanced bilingualism and cognitive and affective growth in the majority of learners. Many Afrikaans-speaking 'whites' who

received *moedertaalonderrig* across the curriculum became fairly advanced Afrikaans/English bilinguals in single-medium institutions in which English was taught only as a subject by competent teachers of the language. Similarly, it is conceivable that once Xhosa becomes a well-resourced and high-status language (such as Afrikaans) in the Western Cape, single-medium Xhosa schools in which English is offered only as a subject might well produce a generation of advanced bilingual students, provided that English was taught competently. Even gradual transitional programmes that phase out the home language as LoLT in favour of English after (say) six years but which continue to offer high quality teaching of the home language as a subject, could conceivably result in additive language learning processes and advanced bilingual proficiency (outcomes) for the majority of learners[15].

In order to be open to the sheer variety of possibilities, it is imperative not to link the term additive too closely to dual-medium or parallel-medium programmes. LoLT policies and multi-medium teaching strategies in themselves do not necessarily make for additive outcomes; the quality of teaching is an equally important variable. Hence the need to proceed with caution when using the term *additive* in relation to policies and programmes. It may be more useful to delink *additive bilingualism* from *programmes* entirely.

This is even more true of the term *subtractive bilingualism*, which in the definition below (Heugh et al) is subject to a slide in meaning that is even more overt than in the case of its twin additive bilingualism. While the definition initially follows Lambert, it soon introduces a further keyword.

> The term transitional bilingualism is often applied in situations where the home language is gradually replaced. Transitional bilingualism is a subset of subtractive bilingualism.
> (1995:viii)

This is a good example of how the subtle sliding of a signifier blurs important distinctions and brings about a shift in meaning. The ambiguity lies in the unfinished sentence "where the home language is gradually replaced". The question is whether the reference is to the switch in LoLT, or to a loss of home-language proficiency in the individual learner as a result of the switch. In other words, does "gradually replaced" refer to *programme*, or to learning *processes* and *outcomes*?

Yet even if we overlook the ambiguity and assume that by transitional bilingualism is meant a change of LoLT, the appropriateness of the subset-metaphor would depend on a

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[15] The likelihood of this happening is greater in instances where both languages are high-status, in which case even L2 immersion programmes have been shown to be successful (cf. discussion of Canadian immersion programmes under 3.2.2.1. below).

definition of subtractive bilingualism as *programme (or LoLT policy)*, not as individual learning *process*. A programme can be a subset of another *programme*; it cannot meaningfully be the subset of a learning *process* or *outcome*. There is thus a shift in meaning of the term *subtractive bilingualism* from one of learning process or outcome (Luckett) to one of LoLT *policy* and practice. It is perhaps out of the recognition of this shift (and the desire to have to both ways) that the double-barrelled term *subtractive/transitional bilingualism* was coined (Heugh 1995b:50). But the identification of *subtractive* with *transitional* may lead to a dangerous dogmatic insistence on the suitability of certain types of programmes without taking into account conditions on the ground.

In practice it is quite likely that the one will accompany the other: research from all over the world has shown that most transitional programmes lead to (at best) a limited form of bilingualism in the learner. Yet the distinction is not merely academic. This is because some transitional programmes may result in additive language learning processes, if handled carefully under favourable conditions[16]. Even if there were no examples of successful transitional programmes, it remains vital to retain conceptual clarity in the interests of theoretical rigour.

2.1.4.4. *Centre for Education Policy Development*

A new dimension to our increasingly fluid descriptions of bilingualism in education has been added by the Centre for Education Policy Development (henceforth CEPD) document's (1993) critique of immersion and transitional programmes.

> Other partially bilingual models involve a switch to a target language of learning that is not the home language. This switch is usually to the detriment of the home language. They are thus deficit models and not in keeping with the principle of additive bilingualism or multilingualism proposed in this paper. These deficit models include: the straight-for option, the sudden transfer option, and the gradual transfer option...
> (CEPD 1993:13)

The term *partially bilingual models* is used in the same way as Heugh et al have used "subtractive/transitional" to signify particular *types of programmes* (the LoLT/LaS package) which replace the home language with another language of learning and teaching. However, in linking the term *deficit models* to the observation that the "switch is usually to the detriment of the home language", the definition links *programme* to probable learning *outcome*. The blurring of the concepts *learning outcomes* and *programme type* becomes complete when three types of programmes are said to be deficit models, by association as it were. Admittedly, this association is particularly valid in

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[16] See the discussion of Nigeria's Six-Year Primary Project, under 3.2.1.3. below.

the South African context. Again, however, the danger of this conflation is that it could overlook successful examples of transitional programmes, or uncritically valorise dual- or parallel-medium policies without examining their language-learning outcomes in learners.

2.1.4.5. DE draft policy

The trend of conflating policy with learning processes and outcomes continues in the national Department of Education (DE) discussion document, *Towards a language policy in education* (November 1995)[17]. *Additive bilingual* models are recommended as a language policy for formal schooling.

> Such models recognise learners' home languages as powerful tools for cognitive development. These languages, in fully bilingual systems, are maintained as languages of learning at all levels in the education system. Further languages are added at no loss to the home language(s). Two or more languages are perceived and used as languages of learning throughout the learner's school career. The dual medium English/Afrikaans model is an example of existing additive bilingualism in South Africa.
> DE 1995:13)

The by now familiar slippage between learning processes/outcomes and programme types occurs in the sentence, "Further languages are added at no loss to the home language(s)". This ingenious formulation effectively equates a dual-medium policy with additive language learning processes; means and ends have become synonymous. Interestingly, they become separate once again at the point where the learner's needs are brought more sharply into focus:

> Full bilingualism may also be achieved through the effective teaching of languages as subjects in circumstances where two or more languages of learning would be inappropriate.

It is also the point at which the adjective "additive" has been dropped, which tends to confirm the view that *additive* has been used to blur distinctions rather than to bring them sharply into focus. If we are to use the term *additive* at all, it may be better to detach it from the word *bilingualism*. Significantly, the term subtractive bilingualism has been dropped in favour of a more precise term, that of

> deficit models of language education which assume that a choice must be made of a `target language' at the expense of learners' home languages. This has effectively ensured the exclusion of African languages as vehicles of learning in all but the early years of education.
> (DE 1995:13)

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[17] The significance of this radical document is discussed under 4.7.2.

In a later version (11 September 1996) of the draft policy the term additive bilingualism has been replaced by *additive multilingualism*, which

> refers to the situation in which one or more languages are added to the learner's home language(s) without replacing the home language(s) or reducing its importance.
> (DE 1996:10).

As above, this is `Lambert minus culture': the formulation scrupulously avoids any mention of *culture*, for historical as well as conceptual reasons that go beyond the scope of this minithesis. But why this apparent endorsement of the inflationary spiral of terms criticised earlier? Why was additive *bilingualism* not enough?

The major reason for the new term is historical: *bilingualism* has been associated with the official English/Afrikaans diglossia of the ruling class ever since the days of Union in 1910, and particularly after 1925 when Afrikaans replaced Dutch as the second official language. For officialdom, to be bilingual meant that one could speak Afrikaans and English. The African languages were excluded from this definition. This policy was intensified and refined under apartheid in order to secure the hegemony of Afrikaans-speaking `whites' in particular, and to facilitate the continued political oppression and economic exploitation of `Africans' through language.

The interim constitution (1993) and the new constitution (1996) both enshrine the principle of multilingualism and pledge the government to promoting the equal use and enjoyment of all the (South) African languages[18]. The term *multilingualism* is one that recognises the equality of the eleven official languages in the interests of nation-building, democracy, the formation of strong subjective identities and in order to facilitate meaningful access to education.

Thus the introduction of the term *additive multilingualism* in the DE's draft policy is more than simply a logical extension of additive bilingualism, respectively. It signals the decisive break with apartheid-colonial bilingualism in favour of a genuine promotion of all South African languages, the indigenous ones in particular. As such the term has enormous symbolic value. The draft policy goes on to stress that

> The key ingredient of school-based additive multilingualism is the maintenance of the home language(s) of learners as a socially and academically important phenomenon in school life.
> (ibid:10)

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[18] For a more detailed discussion, see under 4.7.1.

Again, this use of *additive* reinforces doubts about the usefulness of the term. Our first objection is that multilingualism itself is a positive good, a desirable language-learning outcome. Hence *additive multilingualism* is tautologous. Proponents of the term may argue that the term has a specific educational utility, that it signifies a shorthand way of referring to multilingualism in the *educational* sector (as opposed to, say, the civil service or to broadcasting). Our objection to this is that the reference to "*school-based* additive multilingualism" implies there are other institution- or sector-based forms of *additive* multilingualism, thus nullifying this argument.

Subsequently, the point appears to have been clarified by the draft report of the Language-in-Education subcommittee of LANGTAG, which takes the view that the best way of "promoting multilingualism" (1996:1) in the educational sector is via additive multilingual models (ibid:7).

The DE's draft policy goes a long way to clarifiying its particular interpretation by typologising "school-based policies which promote additive multilingualism", as follows:

> the use of more than one language, one of which is a home language, for teaching and learning in the classroom;
>
> the use of more than one language, one of which is a home language, for learning and teaching in the school as a whole;
>
> the use of a home language for teaching and learning, coupled with the teaching of further language(s) as subjects.
> (ibid:10)

This formulation unambiguously views additive multilingualism as language-learner *outcomes*, facilitated by dual medium, parallel medium, and home language single-medium LoLT policies, respectively. For the first time the distinction between means and ends has been clearly drawn. We could reformulate this by saying that for the majority of learners, advanced bi/multilingualism is likely to be the result or *outcome* of these policies.

However, a degree of conceptual unclarity is reintroduced with a further implied distinction:

> Examples of strong manifestations of additive multilingualism are the use of two or more languages for learning and teaching coupled with effective teaching of other languages as subjects.
> (ibid:10)

A more nuanced understanding of additive multilingualism is introduced here: the reference to "strong manifestations" indicates an awareness that some programmes are

particularly conducive to promoting multilingualism. It also implies the existence of weaker manifestations of additive multilingualism. However, the potentially useful distinction is blurred somewhat by the slide towards identifying additive multilingualism with particular *types of programmes* once again, instead of with individual language-learning *outcomes* as before.

An example of a weaker manifestation of school-based additive multilingualism is the "transitional approach".

> The transitional approach, in which a second language replaces the home language as a language of teaching, is not an additive approach. However, it may still be planned in such a way that it has additive features, such as the learning of the home language as a subject, or the assignment of time to the home language in all subjects in order to facilitate learning. If a home language is only offered as a subject it could provide integrated support to learners in other areas of the curriculum.

This formulation is notable for its political realism and creativity in proposing solutions. In order to deal with such constraints as political will and the (un)availability of competent teachers and appropriate learning resources, the formulation wisely makes provision for policies that appear less conducive to additive outcomes at present but which may yet be transformed into ones that do. However, "additive features" are identified with particular *programme types or adaptations*, rather than with learning *processes* and *outcomes*. As such they run the risk of shifting the attention from the quality of teaching (and learning) to the bare bones of LoLT policies. Substantively, it is hard to disagree with the sentiment expressed below, which succinctly explains why we need education for multilingualism.

> It must be stressed that additive multilingualism models should aim towards a high degree of proficiency in at least two languages, one of which should be a home language, in order to maximise the potential cognitive and affective benefits of such approaches.
> (DE 1996:10).

2.1.4.6. Preferred use of terms

For the rest of this minithesis, and often for lack of viable alternatives, it will be necessary to use certain of the terms critiqued above. This is because they shape a discourse which in South Africa's case has all the excitement and possibility of contributing to real change. Wherever possible, however, I have tried to use terms in a manner that is consistent with my critique of them.

For present purposes, then, **bi-/multilingualism** is used primarily with regard to **individuals**, and only secondarily to describe language policies or institutional programmes. Thus we have education for individual bi-/multilingualism, or simply

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education for multilingualism (rather than multilingual education). **Proficiency** in a second or third language is a matter of degree, and can range from **initial** or **limited proficiency** to **advanced** or **full proficiency**. It is assumed throughout that the basis for individual bi/multilingualism is advanced proficiency in the **home** or **first language**. Policies and programmes that result in **additive** language learning **processes** and an **advanced proficiency (outcomes)** in two or more languages are termed **strong programmes for bi/multilingualism**. Policies and programmes that result in **non-additive** language-learning **processes** and **limited** or **restricted proficiency (outcomes)** in two or more languages are labelled **weak programmes for bi/multilingualism**. The descriptors *strong* and *weak* seem unsatisfactory, yet have the advantage of *relativising* structures designed to facilitate a very complex developmental process, that of learning at least one additional language.

Ultimately, whatever the terminology, the challenge for educators is to develop those programmes that facilitate additive language learning processes, advanced bi/multilingualism and beneficial cognitive/affective outcomes for the maximum number of learners. Fortunately international and some domestic research results give us a fairly good idea as to which programmes to develop in pursuit of these goals.

Before reviewing such programmes, however, we have to take an *excursus* through language processing theory in order to lay the basis for the subsequent discussion.

2.1.5. Beliefs about bi- and multilingual education

Underlying this minithesis is the belief that education for bi/multilingualism can work, under specified conditions. What is meant by "can work" and "specified conditions" will be explored in the course of this chapter. For the moment it is necessary to spell out my own assumptions, my own ideology about second-language development and bi/multilingual education in the South African context. In point form, these can be summarised as follows (adapted from Heugh *et al* 1995:vi):

* bi- and multilingualism is normal in most societies, including our own;
* languages in education can usefully be regarded as resources, not as dispensable waste-matter
* first languages are the primary vehicles for cognitive development
* English has unprecedented status and power in our society, and should be made universally accessible as a second language
* African languages should be promoted by the state for purposes of acquisition, democratisation and nation-building

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- programmes promoting multilingualism should be strongly encouraged as being appropriate to our multilingual society.

The ideology underlying these statements of belief could be termed humanist, democratic, interventionist: humanist in the sense of seeking to enable each person to fulfil her or his full potential, using their languages as resources to gain access to society; democratic in the sense of seeking equitable treatment for all official languages and all other languages used in South Africa, where feasible, particularly those indigenous languages hitherto neglected; and interventionist in the sense of believing in the need for a state-sponsored language policy on the basis of a coherent national language plan.

For the moment it is necessary to examine research into second-language acquisition in order to remind ourselves of the psycholinguistic basis for education for bi/multilingualism. Without this basis being made explicit it will not be easy to convince sceptics and opponents of the very solid reasons for promoting first-language and bilingual models of education. As we will see, the most likely opposition to education for bi/multilingualism is likely to come from those for whom `mother tongue instruction' has been stigmatised as a result of divisive and discriminatory apartheid policies.

2.2. Cognitive and linguistic basis for bi/multilingual education

Research by Cummins (1984 and 1991), Cummins & Swain (1986), Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins (1988), and Bialystok & Cummins (1991) has yielded several key insights into the relationship between cognition, second-language acquisition and bilingual education. In this section I propose to briefly discuss each of the following terms: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); the threshold hypothesis; the interdependence principle and the Common Underlying Proficiency model; and context-embedded and context-reduced communication.

2.2.1. BICS and CALP

Basic to an understanding of bilingual language proficiency is the distinction Cummins developed in 1979/80 between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Based on a similar distinction between surface fluency and academically related aspects of language proficiency by Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa in 1976 (Cummins 1984:136), BICS and CALP became the building blocks for a suggestive theory of language proficiency. BICS refers to "the manifestation of language proficiency in everyday communicative contexts", while CALP is the "manipulation of language in decontextualised academic situations" (ibid:137). The significance of the BICS/CALP distinction is that it "helps explain the relative failure within

the educational system of many minority language children" (Baker 1993:138). In other words, it provides one answer to the question as to why a bilingual child who converses fluently with her friends in her second language should nevertheless fail to perform well academically in that language. In South Africa, scenes such as the above are commonplace in English-medium ex-HoR (HC) schools that enrol increasing numbers of African-language speakers who appear to cope well socially in their second language but who struggle with the demands of the curriculum, particularly from the senior primary phase upwards[19]. The BICS/CALP distinction has, however, been criticised for painting a two-stage idea, for lacking empirical support, for possibly oversimplifying reality, and for overlooking other factors (e.g. motivation; school, home and community effects) that influence cognitive & linguistic acquisition (Baker 1993:12). Mindful of these and other criticisms, Cummins took the dichotomous distinction a step further in elaborating a more complex model, discussed below.

2.2.2. Threshold hypothesis

The hypothesis of threshold levels of linguistic competence, or the thresholds theory, was put forward by Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas (1976) and by Cummins (1977) (Baker 1993:136f). In Baker's description (ibid) the threshold hypothesis holds that there are two ceilings or threshold levels of language competence that impact on the bilingual learner's performance. In order to avoid the negative cognitive consequences of bilingualism associated with failure to develop beyond low levels of competence in both languages (in relation to same-age children), the learner has to reach the first threshold or level. This level is described in terms of a learner's age-appropriate competence in one but not two languages, resulting in an absence of negative or positive cognitive effects. Balanced bilinguals, on the other hand, who have age-appropriate competence in both their languages may experience cognitive advantages over their monolingual peers. They can cope with curriculum demands in either language (Baker 1993:137). Research findings by Bialystok (1988:567) into metalinguistic awareness of 6 to 7 year old monolingual, partial bilingual and fluently French-English children, respectively, support the threshold hypothesis. She found that a child's level of development is decisively determined by the level of bilingualism (cited in Baker 1993:137). Educational implications of the threshold hypothesis relate to the types of programmes available to bilinguals; these will be dealt with in more detail below. Baker does note one problem with the threshold hypothesis, namely its vagueness about the exact level of language competence a learner must have so as to avoid the negative effects of bilingualism on cognition, and to experience the advantages of bilingualism (ibid).

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[19] This often also applies to L1 Afrikaans speakers, L1 English speakers and bilingual Afrikaans/English speakers in HC schools [Zubeida Desai - personal communication].

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2.2.3. The Common Underlying Proficiency model (interdependence principle)

Cummins took the threshold hypothesis a step forward by positing a common underlying proficiency between the two languages of a bilingual person. Also termed the interdependence principle, the CUP model holds that "experience with either language can promote development of the proficiency underlying both languages, given adequate motivation and exposure to both either in school or in the wider environment" (Cummins & Swain 1986: 82). Or, in formulaic terms:

> To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly.
> (ibid:87)

Crucially for schooling, the "underlying proficiency is that involved in cognitively demanding communicative tasks" (ibid). In other words, curriculum content (such as reading for specific information) in a particular subject is transferable across languages in a bilingual individual. For example, in an English-medium Model C school this may mean that a Std 3 Xhosa-speaking learner who has learnt and understood the concept 'ozone depletion' in her Std 2 science class in her home language in an ex-DET school should be able to acquire and build on the English term in her Std 3 science class without having to undergo additional cognitive processing. What is learnt is the same content in a second language. In semiotic terms, only the signifier has to be learnt; the signified is already known.

The CUP model explicitly rejects the key assumption underlying the Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) model, namely that proficiency in the L1 is separate from proficiency in the L2 and that content and skills learnt through the first cannot therefore transfer to the second language, or vice versa (Cummins & Swain 1986:81). The main implication of this assumption is that minority children who are deficient in English need instruction in English, not in their first language (ibid).

The main sources of evidence in favour of the CUP model are the results of bilingual educational programmes; studies relating age on arrival and immigrant students' L2 acquisition; and studies relating bilingual language use in the home to academic achievement (ibid:82). Termed the "dual-iceberg" proficiency by Cummins (1984:144) and the "iceberg analogy" by Baker (1993:134-5), the interdependence principle can be represented as a single iceberg with two peaks jutting above the surface. Each peak represents the surface features of the first and second language, respectively. Underneath the surface, however, they grow out of the same central operating system of the brain which ensures transfer of cognitive knowledge across languages; "common

cross-lingual proficiencies underlie different surface manifestations of each language" (Cummins 1984:144). Literacy skills that are transferable across languages include conceptual knowledge (e.g. `transparency'), subject matter (`ozone depletion'), higher order thinking skills, reading strategies, and essay-writing skills (ibid).

An interesting feature of the CUP model is that age on arrival (for immigrant or in-migrant learners) has an effect on second-language acquisition. In terms of the interdependence principle "older learners who are more cognitively mature and whose L1 proficiency is better developed would acquire cognitively demanding aspects of L2 proficiency more rapidly than younger learners" (Cummins & Swain 1986:87). The assumption that older learners have a sufficiently well-developed first-language proficiency is not necessarily true of African-language-speaking learners who have escaped home-language instruction in the impoverished ex-DET school system by enrolling in historically `white' or `coloured' schools where teaching takes place through the medium of English.

Cummins (1984:146) finds support for the CUP model in research done by EG Malherbe in South Africa in 1938, whose Afrikaans-English bilingual education study of almost 19000 primary and high school students found a high degree of transfer of academic skills across the two languages. This was especially true of students with low bilingual proficiency. As Malherbe himself puts it,

> Even with the duller pupils it was found that, contrary to general belief, their education was facilitated by using both channels of communication available in the supporting environment. (1977:61)

Despite the slightly arcane terminology, Malherbe's study is extremely important as it constitutes one of the few large-scale investigations into bilingualism in South Africa.

Support for the interdependence principle has also come from Hakuta (1986), whose careful examination of whether and to what extent bilingualism aids general cognitive development in learners is noteworthy for its even-handedness. In reflecting on bilingualism Hakuta avers, "The bilingual uses his or her languages as an interdependent system" (1986:232). Earlier, in arguing in favour of a more refined notion of "proficiency in English" (217-8), Hakuta draws attention to Cummins' distinction between contextualised and decontextualised language use.

In a later study, Cummins (1991) seeks to clarify the relationship between first-language and second-language proficiency (interdependence hypothesis) by distinguishing between attribute-based and input-based aspects of proficiency (1991:70). Attribute-based aspects comprise the individual learner's cognitive and personality variables. Input-based aspects relate to "the quality and quantity of L2 input received from the

environment" (ibid). Surveying a wide range of studies done amongst language minority groups, Cummins finds that crosslingual relationships (i.e. between a learner's L1 and L2) are particularly characteristic of decontextualised language proficiency (ibid:84). Both attribute-based and input-based factors converge to confirm the validity of the interdependence principle (ibid).[20]

Further, albeit qualified support for the interdependence principle emerges from Bialystok & Cummins (1991). In reviewing studies of the relationship between cognition, language and education, they conclude that while there is interaction between L1 and L2 skills, "there is evidence of the specialization of the two languages" (1991:229). Significantly, however, they quote research by Snow which found that "school tasks [i.e. those requiring decontextualised language proficiency] seem impervious to the language in which the problem is presented and are solved equally by both languages" (ibid). The authors' plea for more nuanced descriptions of children's performance on linguistic tasks indirectly lends support to the interdependence principle by affirming the need to distinguish between tasks that are conversational/ contextualised/ informal, on the one hand, and tasks that are academic/ decontextualised/ formal, on the other (ibid:230).

To conclude this discussion of the interdependence principle, I can do no better than paraphrase Baker's (1993:135) summary of the beliefs informing the CUP model, as follows:

- The four modes of language (listening, speaking, reading, writing) originate in the same operating system in a bilingual individual, irrespective of which language the individual is using;
- Since an individual is capable of easily storing two or more languages, bi- and multilingualism is possible;
- Information processing skills and educational performance may be developed equally well through two languages and one language;
- The language a learner uses in the classroom needs to be sufficiently well developed to process the cognitive demands of the curriculum;
- Using the four language modes in the first or the second language helps the development of the whole cognitive system, provided the language in which the learners are made to operate is sufficiently well developed. Failure to function fully in one or both languages may negatively affect a learner's cognitive functioning and academic performance.

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[20]Cummins' findings are more differentiated than I can discuss here. Interested readers are referred to the complex interactions between attribute-based and input-based factors analysed on pp. 84-86.

2.2.4. Context-embedded and context-reduced communication

We have already seen that Cummins' BICS/CALP distinction was criticised for oversimplifying reality and ignoring affective factors, amongst others. In response to these and other criticisms, Cummins developed a more complex model of language proficiency on the basis of the BICS/CALP distinction. Briefly, language proficiency is conceptualised along two continua. Both address the issue of communicative competence. The horizontal

```
                    Cognitively
                    Undemanding
                    Communication
                         |
  (1) One-to-one         |
                         |
             (2) Demonstration |
                              |
  Context                     |                    Context
  Embedded  ——————————————————+——————————————————  Reduced
  Communication               |                    Communication
                              |
                   (3) Oral explanation
                              |
                              |        (4) Worksheet
                              |
                         |
                    Cognitively
                    Demanding
                    Communication
```
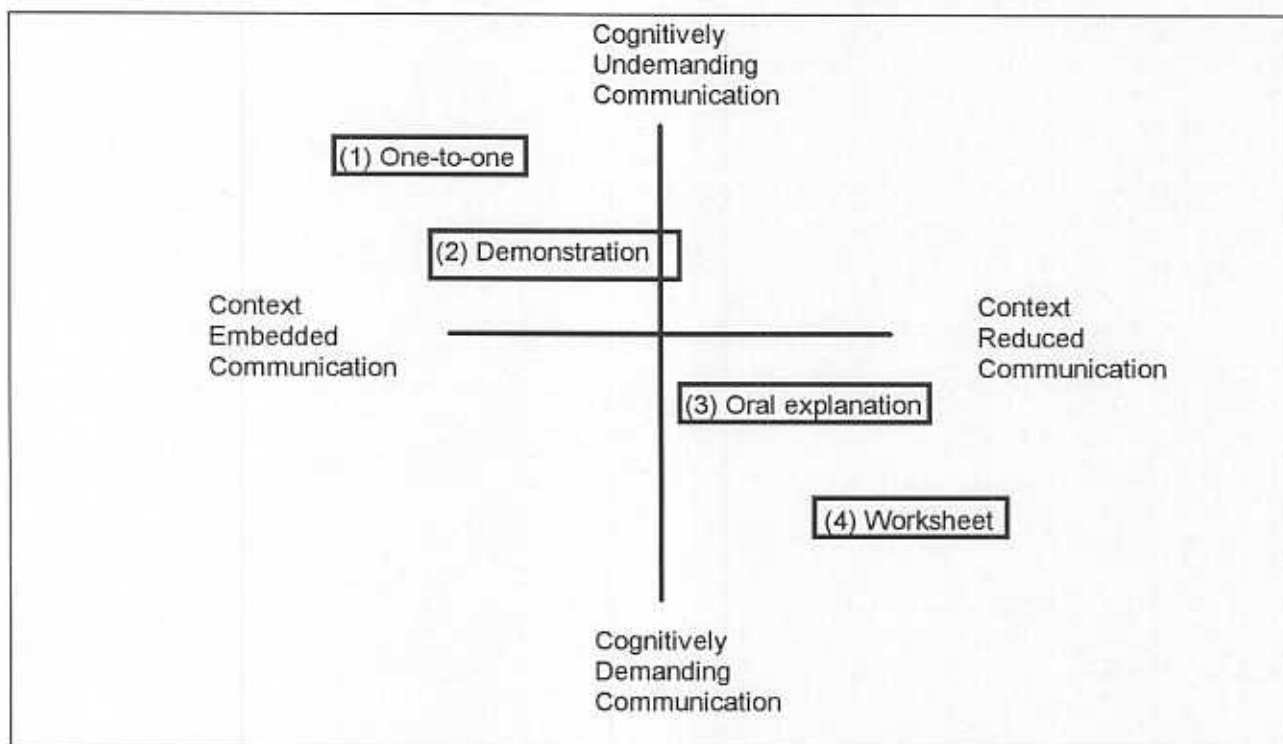
(*adapted from Baker 1993:143*)

continuum charts the range of contextual support for receiving or expressing meaning, from `context-embedded' to `context-reduced' (Cummins 1984:143). The vertical continuum marks the degree of cognitive involvement demanded of a learner by a specific communicative situation, from `cognitively undemanding' to `cognitively demanding' (ibid). Put differently, it conceptualises "developmental aspects of communicative proficiency in terms of the degree of active cognitive involvement in the task or activity" (Cummins & Swain 1986:154). The model allows for the conceptualisation of four quadrants or instances of communicative competence: context-embedded and cognitively undemanding (for example, an exchange of greetings with a friend, using non-verbal gestures, i.e. BICS); context-embedded and cognitively demanding; context-reduced and cognitively undemanding; and context-reduced and cognitively-demanding (e.g. reading and writing about an academic text in isolation in the classroom, i.e. CALP). For present purposes, two points are worth highlighting. Firstly, surface fluency or BICS in a learner's second language develops independently of BICS in the learner's first language (Baker

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1993:140). For example, a Xhosa-speaker attending an English-medium school and being exposed to English for the first time should be able to pick up surface fluency in English without drawing on her BICS in Xhosa.

Secondly, context-reduced, cognitively-demanding communication functions interdependently or cross-lingually. That is, CALP developed in one language can readily transfer to the other under appropriate circumstances. This implies that bilingual education will succeed when learners are proficient enough in their first or their second language to engage with literacy and academic curricular activity (ibid:140).

One further distinction helps us understand why particular models of bilingual education succeed and others do not. It concerns the time span required to develop proficiency in the second language. For Cummins, according to Baker (1993:140), it takes one or two years for a learner to acquire context-embedded second language fluency (i.e. BICS). However, the period for acquiring context-reduced and particularly cognitive-demanding proficiency (CALP) ranges from five to seven years - under optimal conditions. In the Model C school context in South Africa, one implication is that for incoming African-language speakers any transition from first-language learning (e.g. Xhosa) to second-language learning (English) is likely to be successful only after a minimum period of at least seven years - and then only if a number of other conditions have been met, such as L1 maintenance and appropriate environmental support for English. Unless these are forthcoming, what may result is a situation in which after a year at a Model C school our Xhosa-speaking Std 4 student appears to be coping well socially (i.e. on the level of context-embedded surface fluency), but cannot cope academically (context-reduced cognitively-demanding tasks) with higher-order skills such as analysis, synthesis, interpretation and evaluation (cf. Baker 1993:141). Frequently, the result is academic failure.

Curriculum relevance for teaching styles is that educators should be aware of the correlation between teaching style or method and degree of context-embeddedness and cognitive demand (ibid:142-3). Thus interacting one-to-one with a student to explain a concept would fall in the first quadrant (cognitively undemanding, context embedded); the teacher demonstrating a concept to the class with the help of props somewhat more cognitively demanding and less context embedded; an oral explanation from the teacher without any props comes closer to being cognitively demanding and context reduced; while a worksheet for students to interact with would be the most cognitively demanding and context reduced of the four teaching approaches (ibid).

2.2.5. Role of the first language in second-language acquisition

Before examining particular types of programmes for bilingual learners, we need to restate explicitly what has been implied throughout the above discussion, namely the overriding importance of the first language in second-language acquisition. In the field of second-language acquisition research there is a large measure of consensus on the need for first-language development. "Maintaining children's mother tongues does not impede or slow their acquisition of English; it is actually helpful" (Klein 1994:26). Conversely, "if appropriate support is not given to the mother tongue, learning an additional language may possibly be quite damaging to both" (Gough 1994:10). This point is echoed by Klein:

> In the case of both young and older children, withholding the first language has damaging consequences.
> If children are denied their first language during their formative early years and are not yet fluent enough in their second language to form their cognitive concepts (up to about age 6), their cognitive development is and remains irretrievably inhibited. These children never catch up.
> For older children, denial of their first language had less tragic but nonetheless damaging outcomes. With the collusion of parents, co-operating in good faith with the teachers who thought they knew best, they were led to think that their heritage language was of less value than English, that it was a "kitchen language" spoken only at home to grandmother. The teaching profession, almost wholly monolingual, reinforced the notion that English was the only language of worth. They spoke of "ESL" or "ESL children", of "non-English speakers" and even of "non-speakers".
> (ibid)

Citing research findings from the UK, Finland and Australia, Klein identifies three common principles underlying language support programmes for immigrants and language minorities in schools: mother tongue maintenance; integrated classrooms; and English as a Second Language (ESL) support across the curriculum from both class teachers and ESL teachers (ibid). Klein shows how British research has countered the assimilationist approach towards black immigrants, and the principle of second-language immersion ("swim or sink") that dovetailed with it (ibid:27). Some teachers' recognition that learning English was indispensable for the empowerment of learners in Britain did not preclude the setting up of research projects that promoted bilingualism. The Mother Tongue and English Project (1978-81) at Bradford University researched the effects of a one-year bilingual programme for five-year-old Panjabi children. Half the curriculum was taught in Panjabi, the other half in English. The programme, taught by a bilingual teacher, yielded significantly better results than a control group working only through the medium of English (Klein 1994:27). One result such and other programmes have had is to conscientise increasing numbers of teachers who "no longer confuse `English' with `language'" (ibid).

Agreement on the importance of the first language in second-language acquisition is wide-ranging across contexts, and goes back several decades. Ever since the

endorsement of vernacular or mother-tongue education in the 1953 UNESCO report, *The Use of the Vernacular Languages in Education*, first-language tuition in formal primary schooling has become an internationally accepted principle (not always adhered to, however). UNESCO's assumption at the time was that formal schooling would only be successful if the child's first language was used as the language of teaching (Heugh 1995b:43).

Siguan & Mackey (1987), for instance, state quite categorically that "[t]his principle of the special role played by the child's mother tongue or first language in the education process... is unchallengeable" (1987:73). Within the paradigm of language as a right they assert that "the child's entitlement to an education in his own language is a corollary to the right of every human group to use and preserve its language" (ibid:75). They advance a psycholinguistic reason for this position of advocacy:

> The acquisition of a second language at any stage following early childhood is always based to some extent on the structures of the first language. The firmer these structures are and the more capable the subject is of reflecting on them, the easier it will be to base the acquisition of the second language on them. This is why there is so much to be said for using the subject's mother tongue in the initial stages of the education process and for continuing to cultivate it at least to some extent.
> (Siguan & Mackey 1987:78)

While less theoretically explicit, their view nonetheless goes in the direction of strong programmes for bi/multilingualism as an approach to the acquisition of the second language. In order to facilitate this, they recommend that the L2 should be introduced in the preschool period (i.e. the earlier the better), and that a communicative rather than an `academic' approach be adopted in which the emphasis falls on the learner's own linguistic activity (ibid).

2.2.6. Multiculturalism and anti-racism

Besides the more narrowly linguistic rationale for the promotion of the first language, there are other equally cogent reasons why marginalised languages should not be quietly tolerated or ignored but incorporated into formal schooling. These have to do with political struggles, the need for anti-racist education, (multi)cultural affirmation, democracy and nation-building or the promotion of national unity. Hakuta (1986:226) spells out the crux of the politics surrounding bilingual education in the United States:

> ...the point is that bilingual education, regardless of the reality that it is assimilationist in its orientation, carries with it the burden of a societal symbol. Bilingual education openly acknowledges the legitimacy of non-English languages in a centrally important public institution, and it appears to threaten the status of English. That is what critics are reacting to. Were it not for the symbolic status of

bilingual education, one could easily imagine the assimilationists applauding the goals of the current bilingual education programs.

What Hakuta is alluding to is the political challenge posed by an affirmation of minority languages in a context that is predominantly assimilationist. The nature of the challenge is perceived as a threat to the hegemony of the dominant class, and appears to blind the latter to the fact that most bilingual educational programmes have transitional LoLT policies that are likely to promote non-additive language learning processes and a limited bilingualism that has as its goal the assimilation of language minority children into mainstream "America".

The nature of the challenge is usefully viewed through what Paulston calls the "conflict paradigm", a term deriving from social theory. Concerning bilingual education programmes its major assumption is that these "can only be understood in terms of the relationship between the various interest groups and that relationship is seen as basically one of a power conflict" (1992:86). Following Spolsky, Paulston draws attention to the hostility directed against bilingual programmes by ESL practitioners such as teachers and administrators, who ultimately view bilingual programmes in economic terms: "the basic threat ... is one of competition for scarce jobs" (ibid:90).

It is to such programmes that we must now turn. In an attempt to gain an overview of what is a complex field, Chapter 3 examines types and typologies of educational programmes for bi- and multilingualism as well as some practical examples from all over the world.

3.1. Programmes for bi/multilingualism: types and typologies

Many different conceptualisations of educational models for bi-/multilingualism exist. Given the vastness and complexity of the field, this is hardly surprising. Despite this variety there is a large measure of consensus on the basic issue. In what follows I will briefly delineate six such typologies before attempting a meaningful synthesis. Basic research (as opposed to evaluation research - see Crawford 1991) case studies of each of the four main varieties will be outlined in an effort to find out what works, under what conditions, for whom, and with what goals.

Most commentators propose a distinction between programmes that promote bilingualism and those that do not, alternatively between programmes that are more successful and those that are less successful. **Crawford** (1991:175-177), for instance, labels the former *maintenance* or *developmental* bilingual education, also *enrichment* programmes. Their goal is to further *additive* bilingualism. Types of programmes that do this are two-way bilingual immersion, and enrichment immersion programmes for majority language children. Programmes that do not promote bilingualism are termed *transitional* bilingual programmes, characterised by a *compensatory* (as opposed to enrichment) ethos. The effect of transitional programmes is one of *subtractive* bilingualism. Examples are *submersion* (sink-or-swim) programmes, and *structured immersion* programmes[21].

Employing a typology suited to the North American and Western European contexts, **Baker** (1993:150-168) distinguishes

> between education which uses and promotes two languages and education for language minority children. This is a difference between a classroom where formal instruction is to foster bilingualism and a classroom where bilingual children are present, but bilingualism is not fostered in the curriculum. (1993:151)

Baker groups ten types of language education into "weak forms of education for bilingualism" and "strong forms of education for bilingualism and biliteracy", respectively. Usefully, both weak and strong forms are identified according to five criteria that cut across them: type of programme; typical type of child; language of the classroom; societal and educational aim; aim in language outcome (1993:153). Under *weak forms of education for bilingualism* are listed

- submersion programmes

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[21]These do not include Canadian French-immersion programmes, which have advanced bilingual outcomes.

- submersion with withdrawal classes/sheltered English
- segregationist programmes
- transitional programmes
- mainstream programmes
- separatist programmes.

With the exception of the penultimate variety, all the programmes cater for language minority students and have monolingualism or (at best) a limited form of bilingualism as their linguistic aim, and assimilation as their societal/ educational aim. Mainstream programmes, by contrast, are designed for language majority children. A weak form of bilingualism is facilitated via first-language LoLT throughout schooling, with the addition of a second language taught only as a subject.

Four types of programmes are bracketed *under strong forms of education for bilingualism and biliteracy*:
- *immersion* programmes for language majority children in classrooms run in two languages with an initial emphasis on the second language;
- *maintenance/ heritage language* programmes for language minority students in bilingual classrooms with an emphasis on L1 LoLT;
- *two-way/ dual language* programmes for a mixed group of minority and majority children in language classrooms in both minority and majority languages; and
- *mainstream bilingual* programmes that are aimed at language majority students in classrooms employing two majority languages.

In all four types the societal/educational aims are to promote maintenance, pluralism and enrichment, while bilingualism and biliteracy constitute the language outcome aims.

The value of Baker's typology within the North American and Western European contexts is fourfold: it is comprehensive without being overly complicated; it classifies programmes primarily according to the language-learning and cognitive *aims and outcomes* in learners, rather than by LoLT policy; its division into strong and weak forms of bilingual education draws clear distinctions without absolutising programme types; and it outlines the connection between school language policies, on the one hand, and societal goals, on the other. Put differently, it points towards the political agendas inscribed into the programmes.

The limitations of Baker's typology derive from its essentially Northern paradigm. Most of Baker's forms accurately describe situations in North American and Western European classrooms that are characterised by (in most cases) working-class *minority language* students speaking low-status languages. However, as is well known, the situation in most

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African countries is the reverse: here it is the *majority* of the population who find themselves educationally and linguistically marginalised.[22] The same is true of South Africa. Nevertheless, the typology may be useful if adapted carefully to suit domestic contexts.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, particularly 22-31) posits a basic distinction between programmes for L1 learners and those for L2 learners. If the goal is bilingualism, the guiding question is,

> under which conditions does instruction in L1 or L2, respectively, lead to high levels of bilingualism?
> (1988:23)

She assesses four types of programmes, of which the first three are subdivided into programmes for majority language and minority language children, respectively: segregation; mother tongue maintenance; submersion; and immersion programmes. Programmes are assessed under the following rubrics: degree of success, medium of instruction, and the linguistic and societal goals of the programme (ibid). Skutnabb-Kangas sums up the relative merit of the four types of educational programmes:

> in all HDS [high degree of success] contexts the *linguistic goal* has been *bilingualism*, and the *societal goal* has been a *positive* one for the group concerned. In all LDS [low degree of success] contexts, the *linguistic goal* has been *dominance in one of the languages*, either L1 or L2. *NOT* bilingualism. The other language (non-ME) [mother tongue education] has been neglected or taught badly. The *societal goal* has been to *keep the group* (or at least most of them) *in a powerless subordinate position*.
> (Skuttnab-Kangas 1988:27; original emphases)

I will return to a more detailed examination of the results, below. For the moment it is sufficient to point out that this is an extremely useful way of conceptualising educational programmes because it establishes the direct connection between the linguistic and societal goals for both majority language and language minority groups[23]. In short, it shows that only programmes which promote bilingualism or multilingualism genuinely contribute to empowering learners in multilingual societies.

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[22]Paradoxically, the label minority language applies even in this instance if what is meant by minority is not seen in mere numerical terms but in terms of power and status. Thus in many African countries *minority language* denotes a low-status language of the majority of people whereas in Europe and North America the term *minority languages*, besides having low status, is used to refer to a numeric *minority* of people in a given polity.

[23] Skutnabb-Kangas' use of the terms language minority and majority language is inappropriate in our context for the reason that marginalised or powerless languages and their (native) speakers are in the majority in South Africa, not the minority as is the case in Western Europe and the USA.

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Hamers and Blanc (1989:189-214) call for an interdisciplinary approach in classifying bilingual education, which they limit to

> any system of school education in which, at a given time and for a varying amount of time, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and given in at least two languages.
> (1989:189)

Unlike Baker (see above) they exclude from their definition those curricula in which an L2 or a foreign language is taught only as a subject. Also excluded are transitional programmes in which no further role is planned for the L1 once it has been replaced as the LoLT by the L2, and submersion programmes in which the home languages of minority language children are ignored (ibid). This effectively cuts out the entire echelon of weak forms of bilingual education proposed by Baker. Instead, Hamers and Blanc divide the spectrum into bilingual education programmes for dominant- and subordinate group children, i.e. they classify by target audience.

Bilingual programmes for children from the dominant group are subdivided into multilingual international schools (for elites), and immersion programmes. Immersion programmes, in turn, are further split into early total immersion, early partial immersion, and late immersion programmes[24]. Bilingual programmes for ethnic minority children are, somewhat disappointingly, not categorised. Instead, the authors provide us with examples of actual programmes which "demonstrate that a subtractive form of binguality is not a necessary outcome" (ibid:206). Programmes listed are from Sweden (Finnish immigrant children), Mexico (Chiapas children), Rock Point, USA (Navajo children), California, French-Manitoba (Canada), St John's Valley, USA (Franco-American children), Bradford, UK (Mirpuri/Punjabi children), Carpinteria, USA (Spanish-speaking children).

Hamers and Blanc's typology adds an interesting angle to our understanding of educational programmes for bilingualism. Firstly, it excludes all programmes that do not have bilingualism as their educational goal; or all those, in terms of Baker's typology, that have assimilation as their societal and educational aim, and monolingualism as their language aim. Secondly, similarly to Skuttnab-Kangas', their definition has the virtue of distinguishing clearly between programmes for majority language children, and those for minority-language children. In our African context we have to rethink this typology in terms of the minority-majority conundrum identified earlier.

Our penultimate typology places us squarely on the African continent. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI 1992:47-58) typology is based on the sound assumption that "the question of language policy in education has to be seen in the

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[24]Cf discussion of Ramirez et al (1991) under 2.4.1.3. below.

broader context of which languages are official or enjoy high status" (ibid:44). It employs a schema featuring three main types or models of medium of instruction (i.e. LoLT) policies.

1. Models using non-indigenous language(s) as the main language of teaching
2. Models using indigenous languages as the main language of teaching
3. Models giving prominence to both indigenous and non-indigenous languages as languages of teaching.

Under *models using non-indigenous language(s) as the main language of teaching* are grouped three related approaches: immersion programmes; delayed immersion programmes; and submersion programmes. NEPI lists *two models using indigenous languages as the main language of teaching*: programmes using learners' home languages; and programmes using an indigenous lingua franca as the dominant LoLT. The third category listed by NEPI again comprises two sub-types. *Models giving prominence to both indigenous and non-indigenous languages as languages of teaching* are divided into gradual transition models, and more flexible multilingual models. The NEPI typology is particularly relevant for highlighting situations comparable to those of the majority of `African' students enrolled in public schools in South Africa. Immersion programmes in Zambia and delayed immersion programmes in Nigeria, for instance, have obvious parallels with the situations of black learners in South Africa. The typology neatly side-steps the question of whether all the listed models are bilingual education models by focusing on medium of instruction (LoLT). It also addresses the issue of LoLT separately from languages-as-subjects. This arguably constitutes a limitation of the typology as it hinders an integrated perspective on the issue.

One further typology deserves mention here. Drawing on research in post-colonial African countries in particular, **Heugh** (1995:49-51) sketches a typology of bi-/multilingual educational models that factors in a category labelled "language paradigm/ view of language". Building on a three-way distinction that views language as a *problem*, as a *right*, and as a *resource*, respectively, Heugh's model establishes a series of connections between social policy, language-in-education policy, and educational outcomes. As in the other models already discussed, Heugh's typology encodes the basic divide between educational programmes that promote bilingualism, and those that do not; in her terms, programmes effecting *additive* and *subtractive* bilingualism, respectively[25]. Unlike the other models, however, Heugh's model foregrounds national *policy* as the decisive element in shaping a particular language paradigm, with its attendant implementation and educational results. Thus policies of segregation, assimilation and integration (via a top-down process) are all congruent with the view that multilingualism is a problem, or at best a passive right. For the dominated group such policies lead, in practice, to subtractive/

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[25] For a critical analysis of these terms, see 2.1.4. below.

transitional programmes, limited proficiency in the language(s) of power, and poor educational performance. For the dominant groups weak or limited forms of bi-/multilingualism may result, with attendant positive educational results. Integration (via bottom-up and top-down process) and multicultural/ intercultural policies, on the other hand, take a more proactive view of language as a positive right and multilingualism as a valuable resource, respectively. When implemented, both lead to additive bi-/multilingual education for all, and equal access to meaningful education. Multi-/intercultural policies have the best chance of also promoting economic benefits beyond education.

The strength of Heugh's model lies in the sophisticated linkage it establishes between national development (politics and economics), language and education. Its inevitable limitation is that implementation often lags far behind the professed goals of the national development plan of a particular country - something not reflected in the model, although Heugh shows herself to be aware of the disjuncture. And certainly numerous recent case studies on language policy in African countries[26], post-independence, bear out the often yawning gulf between professed policy and educational outcomes all over sub-Saharan Africa, as in Tanzania (Yahya-Othman (1996), Zimbabwe (Roy-Campbell 1996), and Nigeria (Chumbow 1990 and Elugbe 1996). As with the more elaborate typology of Baker (see above), Heugh's model runs the risk of idealising situations that are in reality far messier than any model would allow.

3.2. Some programme examples

Drawing on the typologies discussed above, I shall briefly outline research done on a number of varieties of programmes. My argument is that there is a basic divide between strong programmes for bi- or multilingualism and weak programmes for bi/multilingualism. Put differently, the divide is between programmes that facilitate advanced bi/multilingual outcomes, and those that effect limited bi/multilingualism. It is true that many of the results of research into bilingual programmes, particularly in the USA, have been inconclusive and have lent themselves to differing interpretations (Hakuta 1986, Baker 1993). However, Hakuta has shown that despite the methodological weaknesses of some studies, enough research evidence exists in favour of certain types of bilingual programmes. Reasons why this has been persistently ignored by critics of bilingual education in the USA are political (Hakuta 1986:226). Given the symbolic power of bilingual educational programmes for minorities in North American and European countries, opposition to such programmes from conservative quarters is hardly surprising. In many African countries, political issues surrounding education for bi/multilingualism have been compounded by economic difficulties. In South Africa separatist ideology has

[26]Many presented at an International Seminar on Language Policy in Education in Africa, University of Cape Town, 15-19 July 1996.

until recently shaped the education system which, despite its uniqueness in some respects, has many similarities with programmes in other African countries.

Programme examples are chosen so as to provide a broad overview of research into education for bi/multilingualism, bearing in mind the socio-political context, target audience (whether majority or minority), the type of LoLT/LaS policy, the social aim and language-related goals of the programme.

3.2.1. Weak programmes for bi/multilingualism
3.2.1.1. Submersion

Submersion programmes are characterised by "dumping" of learners of low-status languages into classrooms of a high-status LoLT from the first day of schooling and with no support for the L1. If they were not so widespread it would be easy to dismiss them out of hand, as they effect monolingualism or at best a limited form of bilingualism within an assimilationist paradigm that leaves learners profoundly disempowered and in most cases unable to participate meaningfully in the formal sector of a country's economy. They produce failure all round (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988:26).

Until recently, Zambia's educational system was characterised by submersion into English for the majority of children, resulting in low academic and linguistic performance, (at best) L1 dominance and poor proficiency in English. For the small minority able to afford private schooling, the achieved linguistic goal is proficiency in English (ibid) and hence access to the levers of power. One reason for this is that

> [the] prominence that has been given to the English language in the national system has rendered the local languages instrumentally valueless, for it is not by speaking fluent Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga or Lozi that one gets a job.
> (Siachitema 1992:19)

Research by Siachitema in 1984 on the use and attitudes to English showed the alienation felt by the uneducated (the vast majority) at the role English had played in creating divisions between them and the educated elite (ibid). Their feelings of frustration at being unable to participate in the "money economy" were due to the failure of an underresourced education system (ibid). Siachitema concludes that "political integration through the medium of English has not been achieved in Zambia" (ibid:20). Given the centrality of education to the nation-building project and the centrality of language policy to educational success, the conclusion is unavoidable that English submersion approaches be dumped in favour of more empowering models that promote bi- or multilingualism. NEPI (1992:50) points out that educational authorities in Zambia, disillusioned with the submersion into English, are moving towards delayed immersion.

3.2.1.2. Submersion with Withdrawal Classes

A variation of submersion, withdrawal class programmes seek to throw a lifeline to "drowning" learners in L2 classrooms by providing support through pull-out groups. Two examples are relevant here: withdrawal classes in the USA which provide extra English support for language minority learners in majority language (i.e. English-only) classrooms; and withdrawal classes in South Africa which provide English "enrichment" to speakers of low-status languages from what could be either the minority or even the majority language group in the class. An example of this latter variety forms the subject of my research in later chapters, and will not be dealt with here. Concerning the situation in the USA, Baker (1993:155) explains that such compensatory pull-out lessons are problematic because withdrawn children may fall behind their peers in terms of curriculum content; also, withdrawn children may be stigmatised as "remedial", "disabled" or "limited in English" (ibid). One manifestation of this syndrome is that even progressive proponents of education for bilingualism in the US refer to language minority children as LEP (Limited English Proficient).[27] Elsewhere (1995:173-4) Baker makes limited allowance for the potential value of withdrawal classes.

3.2.1.3. Delayed Immersion/ transitional programmes

Delayed immersion or transitional bilingual programmes teach learners with a low-status language through the medium of their L1 for the first few years before switching to the medium of a high-status L2 for the remainder of schooling. The home language has no intrinsic, only an instrumental value (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988:40), and serves as a bridge to learning the L2 (ibid). Although Skutnabb-Kangas describes transitional programmes as "a more sophisticated version of submersion programmes" (ibid), I have followed NEPI in referring to them as delayed immersion because of important differences to submersion programmes.

In South Africa, Macdonald's research in the late 1980s (the Threshold Project) sought to examine the nature of the language and learning difficulties experienced by Sepedi-speaking children upon immersion into English-medium teaching in Std 3. Up to that point English had been taught only as a subject. The abrupt switch from L1 to L2 teaching in the Primary English Upgrading Project in the former Bophuthatswana had disastrous consequences for the children's learning. In Macdonald's cautious formulation,

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[27]See, for instance, Crawford 1991; Ramirez 1991. The use of the term limited English proficient signals a deficit approach to learning - students are measured in terms of what they do not have, as opposed to the language/s they already know - that is in keeping with the goal of assimilation into mainstream schooling, which is the stated aim of bilingual educational programmes in the US generally (see Ramirez et al 1991:1).

> The pronounced weakness which we discovered in the children's English skills leads us to believe that the current generation of junior primary children cannot cope with the challenge of the medium transfer in Std 3, at least in its present form. (1990:137)

Aptly termed "vertraagde indompeling" by Macdonald for its connotation of "dumping", delayed immersion programmes usually fail because teachers are often not confident or competent in the L2 (NEPI 1992:51), lessons are inflexibly transmitted, and textbooks and other educational materials fail to "scaffold" (Macdonald's term) learners from the level of L2 as a subject to the level of L2 as LoLT (ibid). Delayed immersion or transitional bilingual models have assimilation as their societal goal and result in low linguistic and cognitive success rates (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988:26-7).

A second sub-category is constituted by programmes that employ a widely-spoken linking language or *lingua franca as the dominant LoLT*, such as in Tanzania (Kiswahili) and Ethiopia (Amharic). Despite intentions of affirming children's cultural identity and of promoting bi- and multilingualism, these programmes belong with those effecting monolingualism or subtractive biingualism. Problems are due to the poor standard of English teaching in primary school which does not prepare students for the abrupt switch to English LoLT in secondary school, resulting in widespread codeswitching at secondary and tertiary level (NEPI 1992:53) or `Swinglish'. In Tanzania, the official switch from Kiswahili to English occurs in secondary school. Despite numerous studies showing problems with English as the LoLT, it remains the only LoLT for secondary schools, who "limp through English-medium instruction" (Roy-Campbell 1994:4-5). In her research, Roy-Campbell found a regression in students' academic performance as a result of the abrupt change of LoLT. Poignantly, one secondary student wrote, "My intelligence is not very good in English" (ibid:5). Interviewees felt the injustice of students having to learn through a language they did not understand (ibid), resulting in feelings of incompetence and loss of confidence (ibid:6). Roy-Campbell comments, "The overwhelming evidence of the negative effects of English medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools is an indication that many students are being shortchanged by the educational system" (ibid:7).The Tanzanian example shows that even six years of L1 teaching and learning, with a high-status L2 taught as a subject, does not necessarily promote additive language learning processes and advanced bi/multilingual outcomes. In fact the poor quality of English teaching has made the programme an example of delayed immersion, and subject to the same shortcomings as transitional programmes in South Africa and elsewhere.

However, not all transitional bilingual programmes are necessarily doomed to failure. NEPI (1992:51-2) sums up research into Nigeria's Six Year Primary Project (SYPP) which showed that children who experienced a full six years of L1 teaching and learning (in this case Yoruba) before switching to English had linguistic and cognitive advantages, and were better at English, maths and science in relation to their peers in the control group

who switched to English at the beginning of their fourth year. Interestingly this promotion of Yoruba led to the development of the language itself, while the SYPP became a curriculum development and a teacher development project. However, this programme proved to be the exception, as Nigeria's language in education policy is characterised by a lack of implementation of the L1 principle (Chumbow 1990) on the part of both the rulers and the ruled (Bamgbose 1994).

Our understanding of the value of first-language tuition has been enhanced considerably by a US longitudinal study of three types of programmes for bilingualism, namely immersion, early-exit and late-exit bilingual programmes (Ramirez et al 1991). Conducted amongst 51 elementary schools involving 2000 Spanish speaking, so-called *limited English proficient* students in 9 states over a four-year period (1984-1988), the study is the most detailed of its kind and provides empirical evidence for the benefits of sustained L1 teaching and learning (Heugh 1994:7). The study's main objective was

> to compare the relative effectiveness of two alternative programs (structured English immersion strategy and late-exit transitional bilingual education) with that of the program typically funded through the Bilingual Education Act, the early-exit transitional bilingual education program.
> (Ramirez et al 1991:1)

Immersion programmes are in the target language only, meaning that all content subjects (across the curriculum) are taught through the medium of English. Teachers are trained in bilingual pedagogy. The goal is to mainstream children within two to three years (including one preschool year) (ibid:2). Early-exit programmes have 30-60 minutes of L1 tuition per day initially, mostly in reading skills, with the rest of the curriculum in English. The primary language is phased out within two years, and children are mainstreamed at the end of the first or second grade (ibid). In a typical late-exit programme, on the other hand, students receive L1 (Spanish) tuition across the curriculum for at least 40% of instructional time for the first six grades. Sheltered English classes that are content-based promote meaningful access to the second language (Ramirez 1994:8) before students join the English-only mainstream.

Students across all three types of programmes were assessed in English reading, English language, and mathematics skills. Immersion and early-exit programmes were compared with each other and with the general (norming) population, while students in the three late-exit programmes were compared with each other and with the norming population. The class sizes and the type of teaching methodology used were similar across all three types of programmes. The sound research methodology assured the credibility of the findings, and won praise from several quarters (Crawford 1991; Baker 1993).

Ramirez' study found that students in late-exit programmes with at least 40% L1 instruction throughout generally did as well as or better than the norming population in maths, English language and English reading skills (1991:36). They were also "expected ultimately to outperform those students who are transitioned quickly into English instruction in English language and reading skills" (ibid). Importantly, students in immersion and early-exit programmes were kept in those programmes far longer than envisaged, simply because of their teachers' fears that they would not cope in the mainstream. Other important differences accounting for the relative success of the late-exit programmes were the fluency of teachers in the students' home language (Spanish), and the more active interest and involvement of the parents in their children's education (ibid:40). Ramirez sums up the essence of the findings thus:

> Simply, if we want children to be successful second language learners, then those who will be able to advance most quickly will be those who have the opportunity to maximally develop their home language. Those children who did so were much more successful than the children who had been submersed in second language instruction (i.e. the straight for English option).
> (1994:7-8)

The findings are significant for South African educators and parents because they point to the importance of first-language maintenance and development as a LoLT throughout schooling, and reject English submersion or delayed immersion/ transitional programmes for the majority of students. Development of L2 proficiency should be systematic, and could be facilitated by the introduction of sheltered content-based English lessons that draw on all the areas of the core curriculum, i.e. by an integrated curriculum approach (ibid:8). As Ramirez points out, however, "concept development... must take place in the primary language (L1) class" (ibid). This implies fluently bilingual teachers highly trained in bilingual educational approaches, and the availability of suitable educational materials.

Parent involvement and support for their children's education is a further vital ingredient for academic success. In South African terms, if parents do not want home-language tuition (mother-tongue instruction) for their children, the latter are unlikely to succeed academically even if the `mother-tongue principle' is applied. Ironically, even parental support for L2 submersion (e.g. in historically-`white' schools) or for delayed immersion/ transitional schooling (in ex-DET schools) cannot ameliorate the educationally deleterious effects of these programmes on the majority of `African' students. The lesson from the Ramirez study is that home-language LoLT policies are more likely than any other policies to involve parents in their children's education - simply because parents understand the language. As we will see, African-language-speaking parents of children in School X strongly desire L2 (English) submersion for their children, but at the same time do little to support their children's learning at home and regard the school as being solely responsible for their children's education. Their disavowal of responsibility is probably due

to their inability to meaningfully support their children in English, as well as to socio-economic factors such as long working hours.

3.2.2. Strong programmes for bi/multilingualism
3.2.2.1. Immersion

Immersion can be defined as a situation in which a group of L1-speaking learners receive all or part of their schooling through the medium of a L2 (Hamers & Blanc 1989:198). Research into French immersion programmes in Canada shows immersion of majority-language speakers in a high-status language - what Skuttnab-Kangas calls a "high degree of success" programme (1988:27). It involves English-speaking children from middle-class backgrounds being immersed in (mostly) French classrooms with the linguistic goal of bilingualism and the societal aim of pluralism and enrichment (Baker 1993:153). In St Lambert, Montreal, a group of English-speaking parents in 1965 insisted on French-medium education for their children. The parents were responding to pressure from a politically separatist Quebec that was moving in the direction of official unilingualism (Hamers & Blanc 1989). The aims of the programme were bilingualism and biculturalism without loss of academic achievement (Baker 1993:158). In practice, the monolingual English-speaking children received all teaching in French for the first two grades (three including kindergarten). English was introduced gradually in Grade 3 and extended up to 60% of instruction time by the end of elementary school (NEPI 1992:48). The experimental group was assessed in relation to their English-speaking peers enrolled in English-medium classrooms. Results were successful in the following ways: the experimental group were as proficient in their home language (English) as the control students; their proficiency in French far exceeded that of the English controls who had taken French as a subject only, although it was not native-like in expression; academic achievement was not negatively affected (Hamers & Blanc 1989).

According to Baker, features that made the St Lambert project successful included the following: 1. the aim of the programme was to promote bilingualism in two high-status languages, resulting in an additive bilingual environment; 2. the programme was optional, and participation was chosen by the parents; 3. the children's home language was valued, not belittled, as they were allowed to use it in classroom interaction for the first 18 months; 4. the teachers were competent bilinguals who were able to facilitate a natural and incidental French-learning process in the children; 5. the children were a homogeneous group with similar language skills and proficiency in only one language upon entry to the programme; 6. the same curriculum as the mainstream core curriculum was used (1993:161).

Lambert highlights not only the linguistic consequences but the favourable psychological and social consequences of Canadian immersion programmes:

> 1) Immersion pupils are taken along by monolingual teachers to a level of functional bilingualism that could not be duplicated in any other fashion short of living and being schooled in a foreign setting. Furthermore, pupils arrive at that level of competence 2) without detriment to home-language skill development; 3) without falling behind in the all-important content areas of the curriculum, indicating that the incidental acquisition of French does not distract the students from learning new and complex ideas; 4) without any form of mental confusion or loss of normal cognitive growth; and 5) without a loss of identity or appreciation for their own ethnicity. Most important of all in the present context, 6) they also develop a deeper appreciation for French Canadians and a more balanced outlook towards them by having learned about them and their culture through their teachers and through their developing skill with the language of French Canadians.
> (1983:97-98)

Are these features transferable to other situations, and are Canadian French programmes replicable in different contexts, such as South Africa? All commentators are agreed that the immersion programmes are suited only to language majority children, members of the dominant group. The concept is not applicable to minority language groups because, as Skutnabb-Kangas avers, the societal goals are linguistic and cultural enrichment of the power majority, and increased job prospects for the elite (1988:27). The essential differences to South African contexts are the low status of indigenous languages, the low degree of home and environmental support for the second language (English), and the lack of suitably trained bilingual teachers (NEPI 1992:49). Thus serious questions arise over whether equivalent immersion programmes should be encouraged here.

3.2.2.2. Maintenance

As previously mentioned, NEPI lists two models using indigenous languages as the main language of teaching: programmes using learners' home languages; and programmes using an indigenous lingua franca. Programmes that teach the curriculum *through the learner's home or first language* throughout schooling offer other languages as subjects only; such programmes are the norm for homogeneous ruling-class children (1992:53). Examples are English and Afrikaans L1 speaking children in South Africa, and Somali-speaking (the home language of the vast majority of the population) children in Somalia. As studies from Canada show, however, maintenance programmes that teach a foreign language as a subject (by the drip-feed method) are unlikely to lead to bilingualism (Baker 1993:157). In order for them to be successful, learner motivation for acquiring the second language would have to be high, conditioned by economic necessity (ibid). This situation does obtain in South Africa with regard to English as a second language, which is why English should be made universally accessible as a subject. The NLP (1986) position of

making English available as a universal second or linking language in South Africa could presumably be much more attainable if `African' parents, in particular, could be persuaded of the value of this approach. It is, after all, the way in which most Afrikaans-speaking `white' South Africans who are enrolled in Afrikaans-medium schools learn English.

3.2.2.3. Two-way /dual-language programmes

Two-way/dual-language programmes are offered in some US elementary school classrooms with roughly equal numbers of language minority and language majority children (Baker 1993:164). Both languages are used in the classroom, often on alternate days. The goals of such programmes are bilingualism (i.e. English plus one other, e.g. Spanish), academic excellence, positive intercultural relationships (De Klerk 1995:19), and biliteracy (Baker 1993:164). Typically, the minority language is used for at least 50% of teaching time. Only one language is used in each period, but children are integrated at all times (ibid). Programmes differ in the amount of Spanish and English they offer initially. De Klerk, reporting on a visit to Los Angeles, writes that in Grade 1 90% of instruction was in Spanish, with 10% in English; by Grade 4 the proportions had reached 50/50 (ibid). Students' L1 was maintained throughout secondary schooling, making for an additive bilingual environment that was "painless" for both (ibid). Teachers were credentialled bilinguals, and language learning from peers was encouraged (ibid). The practice of maintaining boundaries between languages and discouraging code-switching was maintained so as to strengthen the aim of bilingualism by encouraging children to use their L2 in context-embedded and challenging situations (ibid:21). As a result, code-switching was discouraged in class. De Klerk is critical of this practice for creating an artificial situation and potentially misleading children into believing their teachers were not fully bilingual (ibid). Nevertheless, two-way programmes appear to have a high degree of success in promoting bilingualism (ibid:20).

3.2.2.4. Other models for bi/multilingualism

Models giving prominence to both indigenous and non-indigenous languages as languages of teaching can be divided into gradual transition models, and more flexible multilingual models (NEPI 1992). Gradual transition programmes start out with L1 teaching and learning and aim to move towards L2 medium in a carefully staggered process. A successful example of this approach is programmes for Turkish and Moroccan in-migrant children in the Netherlands. No successful examples of this type exist in Africa, although Namibia is aspiring towards this model as an intermediate step towards English immersion. Successful examples of programmes for multilingualism are India's modified three-language policy in which either the regional language or Hindi or English can serve as the LoLT, and Dade County (Florida, USA) private schools for working-class Cuban-

American children are very successful - chiefly because they maintain and develop the child's home language as the main vehicle for cognitive and linguistic development.

A South American example of a strong project for bilingualism is described in Hornberger's (1987) ethnographic study of a bilingual education school and community in southern Peru. Within a broadly enabling policy framework, the Experimental Bilingual Education Project of Puno was started in 1977. The project, run in 100 schools for Puno's large Quechua-speaking community from 1980, began life as a transitional bilingual programme (Quechua to Spanish) and gradually evolved into a maintenance bilingual educational programme (1987:208). The aim of the Project schools was to use Quechua as LoLT in constant amounts throughout all six years of primary schooling. During the first year, bilingual education was introduced only in the first grade; in the second year, in the first two grades; in the third year, in the first three grades, etc. (ibid:209). Hornberger's observations of classroom language use showed that the Project succeeded in introducing Quechua as LoLT. In contrast to traditional (transitional) programmes, there was more Quechua language use in Project school classrooms, both by pupils and by teachers. Both used a linguistically more complete form of Quechua than did their controls in non-Project schools, although they used a more reduced form of Spanish (ibid:213). About half of all written language in the bilingual educational classrooms was in Quechua, while in the control classrooms there was virtually none (ibid:214). The pedagogical benefits are summed up as follows:

> The Project succeeded in achieving the use of Quechua as medium of instruction allotted equal time with Spanish. The direct result of this use of Quechua was the improved transmission of educational content as evidenced in a number of differences in the interactions among pupil, teacher, and curriculum.
> (Hornberger 1987:214)

Pupil participation in the bilingual educational classroom was much greater than in the traditional classroom - in oral work, reading, and writing (ibid). Children visibly felt more at home in Quechua than in Spanish in all three skills areas. Use of Quechua also appeared to positively affect classroom behaviour. Significantly for our context[28], Hornberger writes that

> the kind of put-down and show-off behavior I observed in the traditional classrooms did not seem to occur in the bilingual educational classrooms This, too, could be an indication that many discipline and behavior problems may in fact stem from the language gap in the traditional classroom.
> (ibid:217)

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[28] This is extremely relevant as many of the teachers at School X remarked on the wildness and indiscipline of the Xhosa-speaking children, particularly the boys.

Concomitantly, teachers in Project classrooms resorted to less physical punishment in comparison to their controls in traditional schools. Interestingly, phonics in Spanish were limited to the Spanish L2 (subject) classroom, and did not intrude into the other subjects (taught through the medium of Quechua) of the curriculum - thereby facilitating a focus on content rather than on form as in the traditional classroom (ibid:217-8)[29]. Hornberger sums up the pedagogical benefits of bilingual education:

> ...the improved pupil participation and content-oriented teacher techniques which come as a consequence of using Quechua indicate a more effective transmission of educational content in the bilingual educational classroom.
> (ibid:218)

Hornberger cites several factors that determined the policy failure of the bilingual educational Project, despite its educational successes. These ranged from larger social factors such as the exploitation of the language issue for party-political gain by unscrupulous politicians, through community insistence on the school's separation from the community, to the separation of the two languages in terms of patterns of acquisition (Quechua at home and Spanish at school) and into distinct domains of use (ibid:218-220). "Community members both expect and desire Spanish to be the language taught and spoken in the schools" (ibid:220). The situation described below is uncannily similar to schooling for black South Africans in historically-`white' or -`coloured' schools in the mid 1990s:

> Quechua is perceived as the language of the home and of informal, intimate, and oral use, while Spanish is perceived as the language of the school and of formal, official, and written use. The school, though physically located within the community, is not a part of the community. (ibid:220-221)

What is at issue here is the prestige differential between a low-status (Quechua) and a high-status (Spanish) language. A further complicating factor leading to community suspicion of the Project was the failure of foreign-sponsored development projects in what is one of Peru's poorest regions. Other problems included:
- the disjuncture between the Project and national policy (ibid:222)
- the contradiction between the promotion of Quechua in the Project, and the declining role for the Quechua language in Peru (ibid:223).

Importantly, however, "Quechua-speakers' rejection of Quechua in school is not a rejection of Quechua" (ibid:224), but is based on the belief that children need Spanish to secure a living once they leave school, and that the best way of learning Spanish is through immersion. Hornberger's conclusion that the Quechua language may not survive the assimilation into the larger Peruvian society is a sobering one that should act as a

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[29]See discussion of phonics in the LSP classroom, Chapter 8 below.

warning to particularly the smaller indigenous language groups in South Africa, such as Tsonga and Venda.

For all its obvious relevance and inspirational qualities, Hornberger's article raises a number of questions. For one, it is not very clear on the exact proportions of time in which Quechua and Spanish, respectively, were used as LoLT in Project classrooms. We do learn that it is a bilingual maintenance programme with constant amounts of Quechua instruction in maths, the physical sciences and social science throughout all six years of primary schooling. And we have learned about the interactional and pedagogic benefits associated with the use of Quechua as one of the two LoLTs. However, we do not know whether such instruction took place in the same classroom every day, on alternate days, by the same or by different teaching staff, and crucially what percentage of instruction time was devoted to Quechua. For if the instructional time in the L1 is less than that in the L2 (i.e. below 50%), it is doubtful whether the programme facilitates additive language learning processes and advanced bi/multilingual outcomes. According to Cummins (1984:133) it takes five to seven years' instruction to attain CALP in the L2. Secondly, we are not informed as to what LoLT policies obtain in secondary schools for Project children. If Spanish (the L2 for Quechua speakers) is used as sole or main LoLT from Grade 7, and the use of Quechua is limited to a subject, the programme is arguably a transitional one - the very type that Project staff were reacting against so vehemently in their critique of assimilationist traditional models. On the other hand, if students attain CALP in both languages by the end of Grade 6, and the L1 is maintained as an equal vehicle of learning, we do have a case of a model fostering bi/multilingualism.

An example of a potentially strong model for multilingualism is the one operating in India, a country with close on 1700 languages, 47 of which are used as LoLTs (Agnihotri 1992:46). Briefly, the original three-language formula (1961) recommended that the following languages be studied as subjects: the regional language; Hindi in non-Hindi areas and any other Indian language in Hindi areas; and English or any other modern European language (ibid). The failure of the formula mostly on ethnic-regionalist grounds prompted a revision (1964-66), resulting in a modified-graduated three language formula (ibid:51) according to which

> a child is expected to learn one language at lower primary (1-4), two languages at higher primary (5-8), three languages at lower secondary (9-10) and two languages at the higher secondary level (11-12).
> (Agnihotri 1992:52)

It is not quite clear from Agnihotri's description whether more than one language is used as LoLT at any one time, from the higher primary phase onwards. According to NEPI (1992:56), the LoLT may be either the L1/regional language, or Hindi, or English,

depending on the linguistic composition of each of India's states. It is also not clear whether the Indian educational model succeeds in promoting and developing already existing multilingualism in learners, or whether the process is a non-additive one leading to limited bi/multilingualism within an assimilationist paradigm.

Agnihotri problematises Indian planners' too-ready acceptance of the mother-tongue recommendation articulated by UNESCO in 1953 - according to which children learn better and faster through their mother tongue - for ignoring India's multilingual character, the hierarchical divisions of domain-specific language use, the unavailability of teachers and materials in the regional languages, and the inaccessible and unintelligible style of "textbooks supposedly written in the mother tongues" (ibid:47). Despite these criticisms India does appear, in its flexible adoption of the three-language formula, to provide an example of how linguistic diversity can be successfully negotiated. This democratic impulse is rightly characterised as "an attempt to accept the actual linguistic situation as a starting point for language planning and policy making" (NEPI 1992:56).

3.3. Strong programmes for bi/multilingualism: key factors

Given the detailed review above, only a brief summary of features that contribute towards strong programmes for bi/multilingualism will be attempted here. If by *strong* we mean programmes that promote not only second-language acquisition but general cognitive, emotional and cultural development of learners, the following requirements appear essential:

- first-language maintenance and development across the curriculum throughout schooling, i.e. L1 LoLT from day one onwards for at least 50% of teaching time;
- the phased introduction of a second language, either as a subject or as an additional LoLT alongside the L1 without ever replacing the L1;
- qualified teachers proficient in both LoLTs and trained in bilingual teaching and learning approaches;
- an integrated approach to the curriculum, especially at primary school level;
- availability of suitable educational materials in both languages, especially in students' L1 where this is not the dominant language in society. This may entail a conjunction of systematic elaboration of an indigenous language by state language planners and educationists (language planning from above) as well as the more spontaneous language planning from below by practitioners, including teachers and students;
- a positive individual attitude and integrative motivation of learners towards learning via their L1 where this is not the high-status language;
- parent/ guardian support for and involvement in their children's education, particularly with regard to fostering the home language/s;

- a generally supportive environment for the acquisition of both languages. For African-language speakers in South Africa, this implies, inter alia, the need to experience a visible raising of the status of the (South) African languages as languages of political and economic power;
- the societal goal of such programmes should be integrative/pluralist, rather than assimilationist on one extreme or segregationist on the other.
- the value of bi-/multilingual programmes as political symbols should be recognised. This entails a rejection of a narrowly instrumentalist notion of the value of indigenous languages as mere tools for the acquisition of English, in favour of a more integrative vision of their inherent value both as bestowers of individual and collective `rootedness' (identity, dignity, self-respect) and as (potential) means of scientific-technological development.

Chapter 4   LANGUAGE POLICY IN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

The present chapter is concerned with outlining the history of language-in-education policy in South Africa. The chapter draws heavily on the work of Hartshorne (1987 & 1995), Alexander (1989), Heugh (1987 & 1995), and NEPI (1992), amongst others, in identifying signposts in South African language policy and practice, with particular reference to education. It will become immediately obvious that language policy and planning in South Africa since 1652 has focused largely on the two languages of colonial conquest (Dutch - later Afrikaans, and English) at the expense of the African languages. The grossness of the inferior status accorded the African languages in society and in education for three-and-a-half centuries becomes more apparent in the light of the language composition of the population, as can be seen from the table below.

TABLE 1			TABLE 2		
Languages spoken in South Africa			**Languages spoken in Western Cape**		
Language	**Numbers**	**%**	**Language**	**Numbers**	**%**
Zulu	8 343 587	23	Afrikaans	2 138 821	63
Xhosa	6 729 281	18	English	695 474	20
Sotho[30]	5 951 622	16	Xhosa	522 875	15
Afrikaans	5 685 403	15	Other	60 492	2
English	3 422 503	9	TOTAL	3 417 662	100
Setswana	3 368 544	9			
Shangaan/Tsonga	1 439 809	4			
Siswati	952 478	2			
Venda	673 535	2			
Ndebele	477 895	1			
Other	640 277	1			
TOTAL	37 684 937	100			
Percentages have been rounded off in order to total 100%			Data Source: The 1991 RSA Census		

Source: *The Education Atlas* 1995:128, 130

4.1. Colonial language policy, 1652-1910

From the beginnings of the colonial-imperialist project in South Africa in the mid-seventeenth century and throughout the subsequent 'age of conquest' (Crawhall 1993:6) language policies have flowed from the imperialists' economic, political and cultural strategies (Alexander 1989:12). As a rule this meant establishing the supremacy of the respective colonising power's language at the expense of indigenous languages in public

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[30] No distinction is made here between Sotho (Sesotho or South Sotho) and Pedi (Sepedi or North Sotho or Sesotho sa Leboa) - an unusual conflation, as both are recognised as national official languages. According to NEPI (1992:22), North Sotho has 3 437 971 L1 speakers (8.70% of the population), while South Sotho has 2 652 590 L1 speakers (6.71%).

life, including education. In the process Southern Africa's long history of multilingualism that predated European contact (Crawhall 1993:6) was at best ignored, often suppressed.

After an initial mercantilist period of colonisation in which the Dutch expected the KhoiSan people at the Cape to learn their language (rather than the other way around) (Alexander 1989:12), the period of `reluctant colonisation' (from 1657) marked the beginning of formal schooling as the Dutch sought to gain a measure of consent for their policies through the teaching of Reformed religion (ibid:13-14). Dutch was taught to slaves and their children in the earliest schools (ibid:15). By the end of the 17th century Afrikaans was spoken as a linking language or lingua franca by most people in the Cape colony, including the European free burghers, East Indian and African slaves and indigenous KhoiSan people (ibid).

Following the British occupation of the Cape in 1806, and its takeover from Holland in 1815, a *taalstryd* or language struggle developed between Dutch and English. Britain's anglicisation policy, particularly at the Cape, meant not only the ascendancy of the English language but also of secularisation (Heugh 1987:111) - something that hit at the heart of a burgeoning Afrikaner nationalism founded on the twin pillars of *taal* and *geloof* (language and [Christian Calvinist] faith). As a result English became the language of public discourse, including education, amongst `whites', with Afrikaans/ Dutch relegated to the private and religious spheres (Alexander 1989:16). The jingoist and linguicist attitudes of Sir Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner in South Africa from 1897, created resentment among the descendants of the Dutch colonists, and a turning-away from English. After the Anglo-Boer (South African) War ended in defeat for the Orange Free State and the Transvaal in 1902, Britain agreed to a request by the two republics that Dutch be used as a language of teaching and learning in schools where parents desired it; in practice, however, Dutch was granted very little space on the school timetable, and allocated a very minor role in education (Alexander 1989:16). At the Union Convention in 1909 the two main `white' groupings were reconciled in relation to the use of English and Dutch. By contrast, the majority of the people were not only given no say, their languages were not at all taken into account (Hartshorne 1995:307).

4.2. Neo-colonial language policy, 1910-1948

Language policies in education after Union in 1910 thus favoured `white' interests. The privileging of one language (English) under British rule was extended to an official English/ Dutch bilingualism, to the exclusion of the indigenous African languages.

Afrikaner nationalism received a boost in 1914 with the acceptance of Afrikaans as a medium in schools. For the first time policies for `whites' made allowance for compulsory

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mother-tongue medium up to the end of Std 4. This resulted in dual-medium schooling for many 'white' learners. The two *taalbewegings* culminated in the recognition of Afrikaans as one of the two official languages (replacing Dutch) in 1925, as political and economic factors combined to fuel Afrikaner nationalism[31]. In the 1930s the Broederbond together with the Purified Nationalists of DF Malan constructed Afrikaans as the symbol of exclusiveness and separateness (Hartshorne 1995:309), and began to agitate for separate schools for English and Afrikaans-speaking ('white') children, and for a rigid mother-tongue education policy (ibid).

Language policies for 'Africans' in government-aided schools during this period were cast in a neo-colonial mould. Broadly, learners were subjected to English-only teaching and learning after an initial period of home-language instruction. Indigenous languages had been written down by the Missionaries, who for the period 1800 to 1953 had effectively run most of the schooling for 'Africans' and in the process reared a tiny English-knowing elite of "black Englishmen" (Alexander 1989:18). Initially it was only in Natal that an indigenous language (Zulu) was given any prominence as a compulsory subject. Nationalist agitation for strict educational separation and the enforcement and extension of the mother-tongue medium (Heugh 1987:309) meant that by the mid-1930s, indigenous African languages were taught as compulsory subjects in all provinces at primary level, and at teacher training colleges. Both Afrikaans and English remained compulsory subjects, particularly in the Transvaal and the OFS. As a result, black learners were disadvantaged by being forced to learn two official languages in addition to the mother tongue, thus placing them at a disadvantage in relation to their 'white' peers (Heugh 1987:130). Coupled with low funding, the policy ensured a poor quality of education for black people. The agenda was undisguisedly political. For as Heugh points out, "A way of preventing black power was to limit educational attainments" (ibid:130).

4.3. Language policy and Apartheid, 1948-1976

When the National Party gained power at the polls in 1948, it sought to continue and intensify British colonial policy by replacing English with Afrikaans as the language of domination and social accommodation (Alexander 1989:21). In the words of one commentator,

> Apartheid or separate development was originally defended as a means of preserving the linguistic and cultural identity of each group. But this rationale yielded to a fevered anti-communism, a growing paranoia, and the exigencies of maintaining a position of dominance. "Bilingualism" in terms of the double official language policy increasingly became a euphemism for the predominance of Afrikaans.

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[31] See Heugh 1987:118

Nowhere was this plainer than in education, a sphere in which different language policies for the racial groupings were laid down (NEPI 1992:25) in the interests of divide-and-rule.

Language-in-education policies for `whites' fitted squarely into the mould of separatist thinking. In 1948 the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, the voice of the Broederbond, adopted a policy of Christelike Nasionale Onderwys (CNE) as the philosophical basis of all education in the country. CNE implicitly rejected as an attempt at anglicisation the dual-medium education which had characterised schooling in the Orange Free State (OFS) and the Transvaal since 1907 (Heugh 1987:121 and NEPI 1992:30). The phasing-out of dual medium schools from 1948 in the interests of Afrikaner language and culture (NEPI 1992:30), and the obligatory extension of the use of the mother tongue as exclusive medium up to Std 8 in all provinces except Natal resulted in the vastly reduced status for the second official language (Malherbe 1977:113). In practice this meant a deterioration of school-leavers' proficiency in English (ibid:114). In 1967 the National Education Policy Act legislated that a learners' mother tongue (if English or Afrikaans) had to be the medium of instruction at school, with the clear intention of "[entrenching] separate education for English and Afrikaans children and/or black and white children, and to abolish parental choice in the matter of medium of instruction" (NEPI 1992:31). They were also intended to deepen the hegemony of Afrikaners by preparing Afrikaans-speaking 'white' school-leavers for positions of dominance in politics, the civil service and the economy.

In 1968, five years after the Department of Coloured Affairs had taken over control of `coloured' education from the provincial administrations, the Coloured Persons Council Act stipulated that the dominant language of the area (if it was English or Afrikaans) be the medium of instruction, with the other taught as a second language from Std 1. In the Transvaal, where both languages were equally strong, this resulted in parallel-medium schools. The policy ignored differences in dialects of Afrikaans (home dialect vs. standard), and was enforced despite strong parental pressure for English (NEPI 1992:31).

`Indian' education was placed under the control of the Department of Indian Affairs in 1965, and schooling was made compulsory. As in the case of `coloured' education, the medium of instruction had to be the official language dominant in the area; most `Indians' had to learn both the official languages at primary school (NEPI 1992:32). In practice most education for `Indians' took place in English.

4.3.1. Policies for `Africans'

The Eiselen-Verwoerd language policy of mother-tongue instruction was designed to assist the social engineering of separating out black people into bantustans, and the ethnic grouping of African people in townships (Alexander 1989:21-22).

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 marked the beginning of formal state control over education for black South Africans (Hartshorne 1987:69). It enacted many of the recommendations formulated by the Commission on Native Education under Dr Eiselen in 1951, the main one being that

> all education should be through the medium of the mother-tongue for the first four years, and this principle should be progressively extended year by year to all eight years of the primary school. (Eiselen 1951, quoted in Hartshorne 1987:68-9).

This was achieved in 1959 when students wrote the public Std 6 examination in their first languages, and not in English as hitherto (Hartshorne 1995:310). However, Eiselen's motivation was not to empower black learners in the way Afrikaans-speakers were meant to benefit from mother-tongue instruction, but "to bind the child to his cultural heritage", to limit access to the official languages and hence to jobs (Heugh 1987:132,134), and to reduce the influence of English (Hartshorne 1987:69). In terms of the 1953 Act, provision for mother-tongue medium was extended, while both English and Afrikaans were compulsory subjects from the first year of schooling. This meant that African children were compelled by law to learn three languages from day one at school (NEPI 1992:28). In the senior primary phase the 50:50 (English: Afrikaans) policy obtained for exam subjects, with non-exam subjects taught through the medium of the L1. However, the obligatory 8-year period of mother-tongue medium was implemented by no more than a quarter of schools (Heugh 1995:43) due mainly to a lack of trained teachers, and to parental opposition. Afrikaans became the dominant language in African education in a short time, especially with regard to its management, control, administration and in teacher education (Hartshorne 1987:29). Collectively, these changes served to condemn `Africans' to a deliberately inferior education and a working-class existence on the fringes of a burgeoning *volkskapitalisme* or (Afrikaner) people's capitalism. The release in 1953 of the UNESCO report endorsing the importance of mother-tongue education was opportune for the National Party, as it coincided with the gazetting of the Bantu Education Act (Heugh 1995:42), thereby bestowing a modicum of legitimacy on an act of calculated racism.

It is important to note that the seeds of large-scale resistance to mother-tongue medium policies among `Africans' were sown in this period. They explain much of the later scepticism of black people towards what has become axiomatic in educational thinking all over the world, namely that most people learn best through their home language(s).

4.4. Resistance to Bantu Education

Separatist language-in-education policies engendered resistance from `Africans' from as early as pre-Union days (see NEPI 1992). With each successive step towards an extension of home-language teaching and learning, and the imposition of Afrikaans, resistance from this quarter increased in scope and intensity. The issue of language medium became the centre of opposition to the system of Bantu Education in the period 1953 to 1976 (Hartshorne 1995:311).

> The introduction of mother-tongue instruction met with opposition from African communities, because of its association with the new apartheid regime and also because of the relatively lower status of the African languages. It was seen as a strategy by the government to prevent African upward mobility and thereby to ensure a perpetual reservoir of cheap labour.
> (NEPI 1992:29)

`Africans' refused to accept the principle of mother-tongue education beyond Std 2, and the principle of dual-medium education in secondary school. Opposition was strong from teachers in the Western Cape; also from the SAIRR and the South African Council of Churches, and alternative community schools in the Eastern Cape and on the Witwatersrand (ibid). Many failed attempts were made during the 1960s and 1970s to persuade the Department to change its language medium policy. Ironically changes began in the bantustans with the reduction of home-language medium policies to the first four years, and English as the only LoLT thereafter (ibid). In the early 1970s the Bantu Education department accepted the restriction of mother-tongue MoI to the first six years but maintained the English/Afrikaans dual-medium approach from Std 5 onwards (Hartshorne 1995:312).

4.4.1. Soweto and after

As is well known, the Soweto student revolt that began on 16 June 1976 was sparked by the LoLT issue, specifically the imposition of Afrikaans in certain school subjects. The reduction of schooling for Africans from 13 to 12 years in 1975 coincided with the unyielding enforcement of the dual-medium (50:50) ruling. The fusing of the highest primary grade with the lowest secondary form meant a huge increase in the number of students entering secondary school. For the first time these students had to write the bridging exam to secondary school in English and Afrikaans, and no longer in the first language as previously. Many more students were affected by the new ruling; much greater dissatisfaction resulted (Hartshorne 1995:312).

> To an educational system already subject to severe strains was added the doctrinaire ruling on the use of Afrikaans in mathematics and social studies. This was objectionable on several grounds; few teachers were qualified to use the

language, proficiency in English was popularly regarded as a prerequisite for clerical employment, and Afrikaans was unacceptable for ideological reasons. (Lodge 1983:328)

The ideological reasons alluded to by Lodge had to do with the influence of Black Consciousness (BC) on the South African Students Movement (SASM), which resulted in slogans such as "Kill Afrikaans!" (quoted by Alexander 1989:38). SASM saw the enforced use of Afrikaans as "an effort to reinforce inferiority among blacks, many of whom were ill prepared and unwilling to use this `language of the oppressor'" (Marx 1992:66). Hundreds of school students were killed by police in the months following 16 June. In response to the students' revolt, the state closed Soweto schools two days later. Before the start of the following school term, the Afrikaans teaching ruling was dropped (Lodge 1983:328).

Politically, the revolt signalled the start of a new phase of the struggle for liberation from apartheid (-capitalism, for some), namely one from protest to challenge. The growth of BC-aligned organisations inside the country was matched by an efflux of militant youth mostly to the camps of the ANC in exile, swelling the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe and laying the basis for the intensification of the armed struggle. The apartheid regime's response was to double the period of compulsory military service (`whites' only) to two years from 1977, and to ban the BC movement after the murder in police detention of Steve Biko in September of that year. It is a story we must leave there[32].

The educational significance of the revolt was that it marked a whole generation's decisive rejection of the disaster that was Bantu Education, and of Afrikaans in particular (Alexander 1994). Whether or not Cluver is correct in his assessment that the Soweto uprising "marked the beginning of the end of Afrikaans as one of the official languages of South Africa" (Cluver 1992:119), it certainly signified the end of Afrikaans as a LoLT in schools for `Africans'. Effectively, "English is now the only language of instruction in black high schools" (ibid). For the sake of accuracy it should be pointed out that while the official LoLT from Std 3 on in most ex-DET schools is English, de facto a great deal of oral codeswitching takes place during teacher talk as well as amongst learners themselves (see Adendorff 1993).

4.5. State reform of language policy, 1976-1994

Teacher, parent, and student opposition forced the government to limit mother-tongue instruction to four years, which it did in 1979 through the Education and Training Act. In 1982 the DET finally implemented the recommendation that enabled schools to choose

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[32]For a critically supportive reading of the BC movement and Biko's life in relation to it, see Pityana B et al (eds) 1991 *Bounds of Possibility. The Legacy of Steve Biko & Black Consciousness.* Cape Town: David Philip.

English as their LoLT from Std 3 onwards (Hartshorne 1995:313). Hartshorne makes the point that the DET had hoped, in vain as it turned out, for support from the 1981 Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) investigation (known as the De Lange Committee) into education. In the event, the HSRC's main finding was the need for flexibility in relation to language issues in schools. The Department's credibility had been eroded "because of the highly emotional and explosive nature of language issues" (Hartshorne 1995:313). By the end of the 1980s English was used as a medium in almost all DET and DET-equivalent (i.e. bantustan) schools from Std 3 upwards, at least in theory (ibid:314).

Henceforth education for `Africans' faced two serious obstacles: the sudden transition to English as a medium in Std 3; and a cognitively impoverished curriculum in the early years of schooling. A huge problem for the DET was

> the way in which the hegemony of English as the target language of learning has undermined the self-concept and cognitive growth of African-language speaking pupils after the initial years of first-language instruction.
> (Heugh 1995b:43)

In practice, African-language speakers were being offered "a subtractive/ transitional bilingual education" (ibid), with African languages relegated to an inferior status. Afrikaans- and English-speakers, on the other hand, were receiving "a limited version of additive bilingualism" (ibid:43-44). For Hartshorne, "[t]he effects of both policy and practice over the last forty years has been to reduce [the] capacity [of teachers and pupils to use English appropriately] seriously, and to lower the standards of English throughout the system" (1995:314).

The fall of Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the political-military stalemate inside the country forced the De Klerk government to negotiate a settlement with the liberation movement. The unbanning of organisations and the release of political leaders in 1990 ushered in the period of negotiations, and with it a new vigour and relevance of the language debate (Hartshorne 1995:314). This sanguine appraisal should be balanced by the observation that the liberalisation of the political terrain was matched by a growing convergence of the two main negotiating partners on the question of rescuing the capitalist project in South Africa, minus its racist trappings. Education and Training was to become a key term in the new discourse, a discussion we cannot go into here.

The National Party government's approach to the LoLT issue was to avoid it. The 1991 A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa (CUMSA) document represented `white' interests by focusing only on the issue of languages as subjects (Hartshorne 1995:314). A June 1992 amendment to the 1979 Act gave parents the right to choose a medium of instruction policy for their school from the beginning of 1993, from the following three

options: straight for the long-term medium; a sudden transfer from the mother tongue to a second language medium; a graduated transfer from the mother tongue to a second language medium (NEPI 1992:29). All three options amounted to "a subtractive and/or transitional form of bilingualism"[33], that is,

> subtractive and transitional from mother-tongue to English. This meant the potential assimilation into English for 70 percent of the population. However, while parents may have believed that they had an element of choice, it really did not matter which choice they made. The choices were doomed to educational failure for the majority of African-language-speaking children. (Heugh 1995a:340)

In other words, parents had been granted choice regarding the LoLT issue, in the manner recommended by De Lange eleven years previously; but the procedure was flawed because unilateral (Hartshorne 1995:315). In 1994 CUMSA 2 did address the issue of LoLT (not more than two languages to be compulsory), but attempted to keep the status quo in white primary schools (ibid:315).

4.6. Hegemony and the "English dilemma": oppositional perspectives

Throughout the period from roughly 1910 to the mid-1980s the defining characteristic of oppositional thinking amongst Black intellectuals and activists on the language issue was the valorisation of English. Several commentators (Heugh 1986; Alexander 1989; Crawhall 1993) have shown how English has historically been viewed, often uncritically, as the language of liberation from apartheid and Bantu Education. For Black activists such as Gandhi and Sol Plaatje at the beginning of the century, English was the favoured language of public expression (Crawhall 1993:7). The vehement rejection of Afrikaans in favour of English as the national language by Dr Abdurahman in a speech to the African People's Organisation in 1912 is another early example. The Communist Party of South Africa did attempt to promote indigenous languages, or vernaculars (Crawhall 1993:7). Yet even Jacob Nhlapo, an ANC member whose proposal in 1944 and 1953 for the respective harmonisation of the Nguni and Sotho language groups remains revolutionary today[34], called for the elevation of English to the status of the `African "Esperanto"' (quoted in Alexander 1989:33). Concerning education, a paper presented to a conference of the Teachers' League of South Africa in 1952 advocated English as "the common medium of instruction" (quoted in Heugh 1987:140), while in 1958 AC Jordan espoused English as the main medium of education on the grounds that it was "the undisputed medium of universal culture" (quoted in Alexander 1989:37). Taken together, these are the views of "Black Englishmen", as Alexander (1989:18) scathingly calls them.

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[33] See also CEPD 1993:13, where transitional approaches are similarly rejected as deficit models.
[34] Alexander's (1989) `controversial' (Crawhall 1993:27) proposal for the harmonisation of the Nguni and Sotho language clusters into two written standards builds on Nhlapo's earlier proposal. Like Nhlapo's, however, it has received little support - primarily for political, rather than linguistic reasons.

Why the turning towards English on the part of the liberation movement, particularly after the Nationalists' ascent to power in 1948? For Crawhall, the effect of the Bantu Education Act (1953) was

> that for the liberation movement the Nationalists had stigmatised both Afrikaans and vernacular languages (exacerbated by the later creation of the African Language Boards and Bantustan Education Departments) leading the progressive rank and file to join their leaders in a reactionary (in the literal sense) endorsement of English as the language of liberation. (1993:7)

For Heugh, this endorsement of English from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s amounted to "misconceptions about the role of English as a language of liberation and potential lingua franca":

> The rejection of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the mid-1970s, spearheaded by the students of the Black Consciousness tradition, had the uncalculated effect of advancing the position of English, not only over Afrikaans, but also over African languages. Among the small, educated black middle class, English became a viable language through which political discourse was mediated. (1995:342).

Crawhall has called this the "English dilemma":

> English has been a double-edged sword for the liberation movement. On the one hand it has been a powerful instrument of liberation, serving a symbolic function (anti-Afrikaans, unity, modernity) and providing a virtually unlimited pool of resources (access to international literature, training, organisation, solidarity). On the other hand English has brought with it its own neo-colonial baggage. As lingua franca of international and local capital it provides its speakers with an entry point into the capitalist class system thus potentially co-opting the leaders of the liberation struggle and alienating the rank and file. ... English is more than a convenience for the liberation movement: it is a vehicle for a hegemony that may undermine participatory democracy. (Crawhall 1993:9)

This last use of the term *hegemony* derives from the work of the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci, whose formulation properly belongs in the realm of social theory but has equal application in the domain of language policy. For Gramsci, *hegemony* is exercised by the dominant group throughout society via the intellectuals, the dominant group's deputies (Gramsci 1971:12). Hegemony is defined as

> [t]he "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
> (1971:12)

Roger Simon paraphrases Gramsci's concept of hegemony as follows:

> Hegemony is a relation, not of domination by means of force, but of consent by means of political and ideological leadership. It is the organisation of consent (Simon 1982:21) .

Whether or not English will become the hegemonic language of education in a post-apartheid South Africa is as yet unclear, although there are worrying indications that this is already beginning to happen. The ambivalence towards English in the ranks of progressive movements, as identified above, has also been termed the "tension... between a reliance upon English and the need to rehabilitate the status of African languages" (Heugh 1995a:341). This tension underpins the positions of key role-players in the broader democratic movement, among these the ANC-led alliance and the National Language Project, as we will see below.

4.6.1. National Language Project

As the first non-governmental organisation (NGO) to concern itself with language policy and planning, the National Language Project (NLP) has become an important role-player in the field since its origins in 1986 under the aegis of the Education Co-ordinating Council of South Africa (ECCSA). The NLP was founded on the experiences of South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED) activists who did remedial work with `African' students in the late 1970s and early 1980s and in the process discovered the central role played by crippling language policies in Bantu Education (Alexander 1994). Language activists' initial acknowledgement of the power of English, and their ambivalence towards it, is evidenced in the name change, just prior to its inception, from the proposed National *English* Language Project to National Language Project (Alexander 1994). The founding of the NLP was a practical outflow of a belief in the importance of language planning `from below' (see Alexander 1992; 1994), and marks the beginning of radical alternative conceptualisations of the language question in South Africa.

The NLP position on language policy rests on the assumption that multilingualism is integral to democracy (Crawhall 1993:27), and that languages are an economic resource (ibid:28). English is proposed as the national lingua franca "until such time as another South African language emerges to fulfil this function" (ibid:27). South African languages should be recognised as official regional languages, and the public be actively involved in formulating and implementing language planning and policy (ibid:28). Central to NLP policy is a belief in the primacy of English, in the value of maintaining the Afrikaans educational infrastructure, and the necessity for a proactive policy for the African languages. In addition, language policy and planning should be taken out of the hands of the state and be controlled by independent bodies (ibid:28). The primary focus is to

develop a language policy for democracy that would "undo the prejudices ingrained through apartheid education" (ibid:28).

NLP Policy
It is more than likely that English is going to play a pivotal role in the shaping of a new South Africa/ Azania since it provides us with a convenient lingua franca/ linking language through which the concepts of a new unified society may be transmitted.
While it is the policy of the NLP to promote the notion of English as a lingua franca/ linking language, it is also the policy of the NLP to promote all the languages of South Africa. People need to be able to communicate with one another through the languages spoken in the region in which they live.
(Quoted in Alexander 1989:69-71)

NLP policy recommendations have also included trilingualism as a desired outcome:

Besides the mother tongue, every South African/ Azanian should have as sound a knowledge of English as possible and, in addition, at least a conversational knowledge of another regionally important language. (Alexander 1994:8)

The NLP has exercised considerable influence on language policy and planning in South Africa, initially through the pioneering work of founding members Neville Alexander and other SACHED activists and, very soon, Kathleen Heugh. Heugh credits Alexander with "shifting the debate from the struggle between English and Afrikaans to the struggle to rehabilitate the status of African languages as a central part of the process towards democratisation" (Heugh 1995a:335). Integral to this has been Alexander's promotion of multilingualism[35], which amounted to a challenge to the liberation movement to re-examine its view that English would be the unquestioned language of liberation. Heugh sees a second influence in Alexander's call for multilingual education[36], increasingly heard since 1990, and now formative in government thinking on education. Hartshorne notes that the NLP's 1993 policy proposals to the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) have been influential in helping to ensure that all South Africans learn at least one African language plus a linking language, born of the motivation to not exclude anyone on the basis of language (1995:315).

Concerning education, the NLP is in favour of the development of a multilingual curriculum which promotes reciprocal language teaching between peers (Crawhall 1993: 28). It has sought to contribute towards this process by piloting a trilingual, multicultural creative arts course in selected Cape Town schools (see Crawford 1996:27-29).

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[35]See, for instance, Alexander 1995a 'Multilingualism for Empowerment', in Heugh et al (eds.).
[36]Cf Alexander 1995b, 'Models of Multilingual Schooling for a Democratic South Africa', in Heugh et al (eds.).

4.6.2. African National Congress

Prior to its unbanning in 1990 the ANC effectively adopted an `English by default' position, notwithstanding the attempts by Nhlapo in the 1940s and 1950s to enhance the status and develop the African languages. In 1955 the Freedom Charter's general reference to language ("All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs") did little to challenge the hegemony of English.

After over three decades of silence on the language question, language resurfaced as an issue in ANC ranks in the 1989 Constitutional Guidelines and more especially at the "exploratory" (Desai 1990) Language Workshop in Harare shortly after the movement's unbanning in March 1990. There senior member Marius Schoon acknowledged that "[d]ue to the lack of a language policy, English has become the language of communication in the ANC" (1990:3). The ANC recognised the "English dilemma" by acknowledging the need for a national linking language (to advance national unity), and for the promotion of various mother-tongues (Hartshorne 1995:315). However, it was unable to commit itself to any particular African lingua franca (ibid), presumably out of a sense of the dangers of linguistic favouritism. The education-related recommendations established the principle of choice in relation to medium of instruction at primary and secondary school levels. A transitional bilingual approach was favoured, with initial literacy in the mother-tongue in the lower primary school giving way to English-medium instruction in the higher primary phase (Desai 1990). While acknowledging the need for an expanded role for the African languages, the workshop in effect recommended educational policies (in the form of delayed immersion programmes) that remain proven failures in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa. This perhaps testifies more to an ambivalence towards the role of the indigenous (*Bantu*) languages in education, than towards English (which was assured of its dominant role). It certainly marks an inability or unwillingness to look beyond the immediate present to a time when the multilingual character of the nation-to-be could become an educational resource.

The additional textual suggestions on the language clauses in the ANC's Bill of Rights, by Desai and Trew (1992), recognise "the multilingual character of South Africa, and the corresponding duty of the State to support the redistribution of linguistic skills through education". They also suggest the "right of access to at least one nationally used and one regionally used language, either as medium of instruction or as a taught subject" (ibid). The recognition of multilingualism and the envisaged proactive role of the state in promoting it constitute a definite advance on the draft Bill of Rights in the direction of "justiciable" or legally enforceable rights (Crawhall 1993).

The ANC's `Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa as adopted at National Conference 28-31 May 1992' represent a step backward from this position. They amount to entrenching the status quo with regard to the dominant role of English by committing the ANC to providing "access to a minimum of two languages - a regional lingua franca and English" (58). The inconsistencies in the document are pointed out in a Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) draft report `Language Policy in Education' (June 1993) in terms of three principles at the core of ANC language policy in education:

- choice of languages
- right of educational access to the development of necessary linguistic skills
- affirmative action for languages whose status was reduced under apartheid

An attached Position Paper (which does not represent ANC policy, but is clearly meant to become it) lays the groundwork for a strong version of education for bi-/multilingualism. In its progressive educational outlook and its clear grasp of theory with regard to language development, it foreshadows the later Department of Education discussion document, `Towards a Language Policy in Education' (November 1995). In the CEPD paper key recommendations for implementation include the following:

1. All South African children will learn not less than two South African languages, and preferably three, from the first grade and throughout the period of compulsory school attendance.
2. Learning institutions will be required to declare at least three languages spoken by the institutional community as institutional languages, and ensure that these languages are used in all operational aspects of its work.
3. Democratic community structures in consultation with the Ministry of Education will select which language or languages will be used as languages of learning and taught as subjects.
4. The learning of additional South African languages will be strongly encouraged and rewarded. (4)

With respect to implementing languages of learning, the document recommends that "The home language of the majority of the pupils in a particular school is used as the language of learning throughout the school career" (12). Other languages would be taught as subjects. Furthermore, "Some form of bilingual education is used throughout the period of compulsory schooling" (12). Two such forms are envisaged: a parallel bilingual model, with some subjects in one language, other subjects in another language; and a double medium model, with two languages used interchangeably throughout (12). Refreshingly, the document rejects transitional or delayed immersion models of learning listed as viable options in earlier ANC documents[37].

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[37] "Other partially bilingual models involve a switch to a target language of learning that is not the home language. This switch is usually to the detriment of the home language. They are thus deficit models and not in keeping with the principle of additive bilingualism or multilingualism proposed in this paper. These deficit models include: the straight-for option, the sudden transfer option, and the gradual transfer option. These three options contain the danger of permanently entrenching the hegemony of the target language of

These insights were ignored by the ANC Education Department in its draft `A Policy Framework for Education and Training' of January 1994. As one of three policy options for schools the document identifies the following:

> A language of wider communication, such as English, to which the school community subscribes, irrespective of whether this is the home language of the learners. If the language chosen is not the home language of the learners, then it should be introduced gradually. (64)

Amazingly, the viability of this option is not questioned by the document despite its acknowledgement of "research evidence which strongly suggests that the conceptual development of children is facilitated by initial learning in their home language" (ibid). The inclusion of this option goes against the rejection of this option by the CEPD document as subtractive/ deficit.

Thus the draft policy represents a reversal on the CEPD document. The ANC's ambivalence towards the African languages is carried through into the draft document, which recognises the need for multilingual education but fails to synchronise its models of languages of learning accordingly (Heugh 1995a:343) and ends up valorising English. The absence of the mention of a proactive language awareness campaign means that despite some advances in the direction of multilingualism, the ANC's draft language in education policy in 1994 enabled English to slip in through the back door once again[38].

4.6.3. Other oppositional voices

The NEPI[39] *Language* report (1992) is, by default as it were, indicative of the uncritical acceptance of English and the ambivalence towards the African languages amongst progressive NGOs and affiliated academics. *Language* presents a spectrum of MoI options, ranging from L1 throughout to `straight for the long-term medium' to various bilingual models. By pointing to its brief of merely presenting different options for policy makers to choose from, the report is able to defend itself against the charge[40] of tacit support for transitional bilingualism. However, the larger project conceived by the NECC

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instruction, which in such cases is usually the language perceived to be the language of power, privilege and advancement. " (CEPD 1993:13) See also 2.1.4. above; and NEPI 1992:72-93.

[38] It is unclear to me whether the draft policy of January 1994 was updated, and whether the ANC currently has a fully-fledged language policy at all. If it exists, it should be made public in the interests of transparency.

[39] The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) was conducted between December 1990 and August 1992 by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). Its purpose was to provide the broadly progressive opposition with a set of education policy options that constituted viable alternatives to apartheid education. The research was informed by five principles: non-racism; non-sexism; a unitary education system; democracy; and redress of historical imbalances. (see *Framework Report*)

[40] See Heugh 1995a:342-3.

for an ANC-led government-in-waiting under the shadow of the "English dilemma", cannot escape the accusation of being indecisive with regard to the relationship between English and the African languages. Specifically, the "options thinking" that marks the project as a whole and the *Language* report in particular fails to challenge the hegemony of English - what we might call the `reality principle' - and falls short of the more radical multilingualism proposed by subsequent policy developments[41]. The NEPI policy options with regard to LoLT/LaS policies are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

In similar vein, other oppositional voices appear to accept the `reality principle' of the hegemonic role of English. King & Van den Berg, for instance, advocate "a flexible notion of English medium of instruction after or alongside a period of mother tongue education" for the time being (1992:33). They suggest

> the creation of a school environment where English usage becomes an integral part of a child's school experience. The influences needed to achieve this would include a teacher workforce whose own use of English is confident and competent. It also means that workable English language curricula, an emphasis on LAC, accessible and relevant textbooks and sound teaching methodologies need to be developed. ... one priority for the transformation of education is a concerted drive on a national level to address the improvement of English in schooling in a systematic way. This would involve focusing on curriculum development, teacher training and support, assessment methods and materials development. Specific programmes that address the needs of the rural areas will also be required.
> (King & Van den Berg 1992:33-4)

Thus the overall direction of their argument is to make the transition to English "less disabling"; the priority remains meaningful access to English. The authors speak of the need for a language policy "that draws on the linguistic skills existing in the classroom rather than stifling or demonizing them" (ibid:34). Allowance for the formal use of African languages in the curriculum is implied, rather than explicitly stated.

4.7. Negotiating a joint language policy, 1993-1996
4.7.1. The constitutions

The Interim Constitution of 1993[42], taken together with the 1994 elections and the coming into office of an ANC-led Government of National Unity, marks a complete break with the official segregationism of apartheid. The sense of occasion is well captured in the following extract from the (first unified national) Department of Education's first annual report, which refers to the educational sphere but the optimistic tone of which can easily be taken as representative for the social sphere as a whole.

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[41] See the 1995 Department of Education discussion document, *Towards a language policy in education.*
[42] Gazetted on 28 January 1994 as Act No. 200: Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993.

The adoption of the Interim Constitution and the inauguration of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in May 1994 heralded a new era for the education and training system, a system based on non-racial, non-sexist and democratic lines. The aim of the new education and training system is to serve the needs of the country as a whole and all its people. Although long overdue, we can now happily consign to the demolition heap the bitter legacy of apartheid education. (DE 1996:10)

With regard to language policy, the historic compromise at the Kempton Park talks ensured the adoption of eleven national official languages, all of which previously enjoyed official status in either the old RSA or the so-called homelands[43]. Other relevant clauses with respect to language commit the GNU to the following principles:

9. (a) The creation of conditions for the development and for the promotion of the equal use and enjoyment of all official South African languages;
(c) the prevention of the use of any language for the purposes of exploitation, domination or division;
(d) the promotion of multilingualism and the provision of translation facilities;
(e) the fostering of respect for languages spoken in the Republic other than the official languages, and the encouragement of their use in appropriate circumstances; and
(f) the non-diminution of rights relating to language and the status of languages existing at the commencement of this Constitution.
(1994:6)

With regard to language policy in education, the relevant clause reads as follows:

32. Every person shall have the right -
   (a) to basic education and to equal access to educational institutions;
   (b) to instruction in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable; and
   (c) to establish, where practicable, educational institutions based on a common culture, language or religion, provided that there shall be no discrimination on the ground of race.
(1994:18)

The individual's rights to equal access to education, choice with regard to LoLT, and the outlawing of discrimination based on language are thus identified as inalienable. Read together with clause 9 (d) above, clause 32 implies that a language-in-education policy should promote multilingualism. The Interim constitution also makes provision for a senate-affiliated body to monitor and oversee the implementation of the principles enumerated above. The significance of the Pan South African Language Board is that it replaces with one stroke the numerous apartheid-style divide-and-rule separate linguistically divided language boards of the previous dispensation; that it is independent of government; and that it comes after the completion of the LANGTAG process (see

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[43]3. (1) Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, SiSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu shall be the official South African languages at national level, and conditions shall be created for their development and for the promotion of their equal use and enjoyment.

below), whose recommendations are likely to inform the Board's frame of reference and actual decisions on language-related matters. The new (draft) constitution of 1996 makes provision for the following right:

> 9. (3) "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex...culture, language..."(7-8)

The relevant clause for language policy in education (ibid:13) reads as follows:

> 29.
> (2) Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account -
> (a) equity;
> (b) practicability; and
> (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory law and practice.

4.7.2. Draft language-in-education policy (Department of Education)

A clause similarly designed to promote multilingualism while maintaining state support for single-medium schools occurs in the DE's draft language policy in education. In November 1995 the Department of Education released a discussion document, *Towards a Language Policy in Education*, which explored the implications of the constitutional provisions for language-in-education policy for schools. While not yet official policy, the document is likely to be adopted in amended form soon. In one of the subsequent versions (dated 11 September) the draft policy, under the heading Languages of Learning and Teaching, specifies that:

> (a) A learner in a public school shall have the right to instruction in the languages of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable.
> (b) The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to
>> (i) the national policy determined by the Minister under the National Education Policy Act 1996; and
>> (ii) the provincial policy determined by the Member of the Executive Council provided that no form of racial discrimination may be practised in exercising this policy.
> (c) Schools shall provide for more than one language of teaching where the need arises.
> (DE 1996:6)

The latter clause bears the mark of much behind-the-scenes bargaining. Clearly, the spirit of the policy is to promote multilingualism through education by requiring schools to offer two or more LoLTs. However, the critical addition of the phrase "where the need arises"

effectively allows for the continuation of state funding of single-medium public schools[44]. Criteria for "where the need arises" have yet to be determined, and are likely to include absolute numbers (as opposed to percentages) of enrolled learners in a particular school or cluster of schools, as well as the availability of suitably qualified teachers and of appropriate learning materials such as textbooks.

The concession to single-medium schools is realistic and far-sighted. It recognises that while programmes promoting strong forms of education for multilingualism are highly desirable, they should not be forced onto schools that either do not have the capacity or "the need" for them at present. The policy also appears to have heeded the salient lesson from the Soweto student revolt of 1976, namely that compulsion with regard to (unpopular) language policies is potentially explosive politically, and educationally disastrous. However, any policy that is unsupported by a shift in consciousness and the availability of resources is guaranteed to fail.

Three types of institution are geared to exploiting the single-medium concession. The first is Afrikaans-medium schools populated by conservative Afrikaans-speaking `whites' for whom Afrikaans symbolises both cultural identity and continued privilege and who are opposed to the enrolment of black children in formerly `whites-only' schools.

Zapiro, Sowetan

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[44] The South African Schools Act follows the Constitution in allowing for single-medium institutions. In an historical move with far-reaching implications for school governance, the Act devolves the locus of decision-making on issues of language policy to the level of the school itself: "The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law" (Draft Bill).

Certain rearguard actions by rightwing `Afrikaners' at `white' primary schools in Potgietersrus (Northern Province), Trompsburg (Free State), Groblersdal (Mpumalanga) and Vryburg (Northwest), where black parents have insisted on enrolling their children in English-medium streams in the teeth of right-wing opposition, signal the inability or unwillingness of conservative Afrikaans-speaking `whites' to accept that legalised `race'-based privilege is a thing of the past. The cartoon above wittily illustrates the devilish resurrection of Verwoerdian apartheid thinking in the case of the Potgietersrus Primary School.

The battle to deny black children access to "their" schools, initially via legal avenues, is being waged under the guise of a struggle over language and cultural rights (Alexander 1996a:2-3). Thus Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen threatened that "the future of Afrikanerdom hinges on Potgietersrus" and that events there signalled the beginning of the end of Afrikaner culture and language (The Argus, 24-25 February 1996). In similar vein Boerestaat Party leader Robert van Tonder avowed that Potgietersrus represented an onslaught against Afrikaans. "The whole Potgietersrus episode is about the future of our language, not the enrolment of a few black children" (ibid). Such utterances point to the perception that Afrikaans is threatened by the emergence of a black middle class who reject Afrikaans in favour of English as the language of political, social and economic power. They do nothing to disguise the obvious racism at their core.

Conservative English-medium schools are the second, and potentially the main beneficiary of the policy. The single-medium concession keeps open a back door for them to continue with `business as usual', that is, with English-only LoLT programmes that appear to offer access to English and that have the support of African-language speaking parents in particular, but which lead to educational failure and societal assimilation for their children. Against the background of the migration to HW and HC schools that have few if any African-language speaking teachers, this scenario presents a real threat to the promotion of multilingualism.

The third category of institution likely to jump through the loophole offered by the single-medium concession consists of ex-DET schools in urban areas who are moving towards `straight-for-English' policies. The pressure for English has moved some urban schools to bring forward the switch from L1 medium to English medium from the end of Grade 4 to the end of Grade 3 and even earlier, with the end-goal of complete English immersion from Grade 1. It should go without saying that even in cases where teachers are fully competent to teach through the medium of English, the educational outcomes of neglecting learners' home languages are likely to be, at best, a limited form of bi- or trilingualism.

In order to shift schools away from such policies, much conscientising work needs to be done and many new resources freed up to give momentum to the promotion of multilingualism envisaged in the draft language policy. In the best interests of children, parents should be enabled to see the advantages of a dual-medium policy, and teachers be equipped to implement it "where the need arises".

The draft language policy has, on the other hand, become a source of hope for many educators. In its reaction the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), the most militant teachers' organisation, welcomed a policy that would create a framework of multilingual models for schools, but warned that teachers would have to be trained in order to cope with the "realities of the country's multicultural and multilingual classrooms" (quoted in SAIRR 1996:136). A year previously the Implementation Plan for Education and Training (IPET) report had identified the improvement of the quality of teacher education as the biggest challenge in the future (ibid:117).

On a provincial level, the gazetting of the School Education Bill of Gauteng in May 1995 aimed to place all schools in the province under one law. In terms of the Bill the languages of all South Africans would be protected; language competence testing could not be used as a criterion for admission to a public school; learners had the right to be taught in the language of their choice where practicable; and corporal punishment in schools was outlawed. The Bill gave the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) the right to veto the choice of a school's language policy as well as religious policy. It was subsequently contested in court by the Democratic Party, the Freedom Front and the National Party (NP) (SAIRR 1996:142-3).

4.7.3. LANGTAG

A further development likely to shape national language policy in education is the work recently completed by the Language Plan Task Group. LANGTAG was appointed by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in November 1995 with the brief of devising an overall language plan for the country within the framework of the interim constitution (LANGTAG 1996:1). LANGTAG ran parallel to the development of a national language policy for education in a process of mutual cross-fertilization.

The report of the language in education subcommittee (LANGED) of LANGTAG is committed to promoting multilingualism in and through the education system by, inter alia,

> ensuring that the languages taught at any particular school as well as the languages of learning and teaching are given equitable time
> (Draft LANGTAG Report 1996:1)

A related goal in pursuit of the promotion of multilingualism via education is to

> encourage the acquisition by all South African students of at least two but preferably three South African languages even if at different levels of proficiency by means of additive bi- or multilingual strategies;
> (ibid:2)

In the interests of the envisaged trilingualism, and of democratisation and empowerment of the vast majority of South Africans, the Report emphasises the need to "promote the development and modernisation of the African languages as well as their equality of social status". Crucially, a language policy in education should

> promote the use of students' primary languages as languages of learning and teaching in the context of an additive multilingual paradigm and with due regard to the wishes and attitudes of parents, teachers and students;
> (ibid:2)

In addition, the report recommends that a needs analysis be undertaken in order to establish baseline data required to pursue the goal of additive bi- or multilingualism[45], and that basic (Sign Language) signs be taught to all children in the primary phase. In a spirit of reconciliation but also with hindsight regarding the volatile history of enforced language policies in education, the report opposes all compulsion with regard to choice of language subjects (Alexander 1996:4-6).

In sum, the LANGED report, taken together with the overall LANGTAG report, represents the most comprehensive attempt to date to map out a national language plan for a post-apartheid South Africa across all relevant social sectors. Its significance lies in the fact that it was commissioned by the first post-election government out of the realisation that an integrated language policy could assist in the reconstruction and development of a shattered society.

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[45] For an extended discussion of this term, see 2.4.1.

How can knowledge of the ways in which children learn and the means by which schools achieve their goals be verified, built upon and extended? This is the central question for educational research.
(Cohen & Manion 1994:106)

5.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the research documented here, with particular reference to data collection strategies. It seeks to explain how my interest in educational responses to multilingualism led me via the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) connection to the Language Support Programme (LSP) at School X. The pros and cons of case-study methodology are briefly weighed up before the chapter examines two key data-gathering strategies. Classroom observation and interviews are scrutinised from a theoretical and a practical perspective, respectively. A final section addresses the thorny issue of research ethics and attempts to answer questions of responsibility and accountability. It will become immediately apparent that the nature of the research tends more in a qualitative than in a quantitative direction, reflecting a certain interest (bias) on my part. The focus is on a descriptive and narrative account which has more in common with ethnography than with the statistical analysis of experimentation. By the end of the present chapter, and certainly by the end of the Chapter 8, the reason for this choice should become clear.

A few disclaimers are in order, however. This is not a case of what one might call `organic ethnography' such as Heath's (1983) research into children's language in a decade-long involvement in the minutiae of life in two small communities and a town in the Piedmont Carolinas, United States. Heath's path from participant observation ("ethnographer learning") to activism ("ethnographer doing") takes full account of social and cultural contexts in what must rank as a unique type of anthropological venture. The only overlap between Heath's study and the present case study lies in some of the data-gathering techniques (field notes, interviews).

Nor does this case study concern itself centrally with the classical themes of the ethnography of communication, such as patterns and functions of communication, the nature and definition of speech community, the relationship of language to social organisation and world view, or the components of communicative competence (see Saville-Troike 1982). It is true that the notion of communicative competence was used briefly in Chapter 2 in the discussion of the psycholinguistic basis for the use of the first language in second-language acquisition. Yet the classical concerns of communicative competence, namely "knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain

settings, when to speak and when to remain silent" (1982:22-3) have not formed a part of my research. The closest the present study comes to an analysis of communicative competence, or the "knowledge and skills for contextually appropriate use and interpretation of language in a community" (ibid:26), is in a description of particular communicative events and acts in the classroom. The specific interactions observed did not, however, lend themselves to an ethnography of communication in the tradition of Dell Hymes[46]. Rather, the interactions revealed particular assumptions about language learning which form the subject of the analysis in Chapter 8. Before turning to case study research to find some theoretical support for the research methods used, the PRAESA connection needs to be spelled out.

5.2. The PRAESA connection

My interest in the Language Support Programme in operation at School X arose out of a visit to the school in June 1995 undertaken under the auspices of PRAESA's schools-based research. The PRAESA research focused on the state of language practice in multilingual early childhood development (incorporating preschool and junior primary school) classrooms in selected schools in the Western Cape. The aim of the exercise was to obtain first-hand experience of what mainstream junior primary teachers did, and what they felt about what they did, when faced with young learners who did not speak the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). The deliberately impressionistic nature of the research is explained by its overall purpose of informing PRAESA preparations towards establishing a multilingual demonstration school as part of a teacher-education project for which the theoretical basis of education for multilingualism already existed.

Over a six-month period from June to November 1995 the PRAESA research team visited fifteen pre- and primary schools in and around Cape Town, and two in the Eastern Cape. The research was limited to historically `white' and historically `coloured' schools and preschools, and sought answers to the question: "What strategies did English-mainly or English/Afrikaans bilingual teachers use in regular or mainstream classes in order to communicate with Xhosa-speaking learners? How did teachers bridge the communication gap in classroom interaction?"

School X was selected because of its high intake of Xhosa-speaking children in an English-mainly school environment. After our first visit we were encouraged to return to

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[46] Hymes (*On Communicative Competence*) conceptualises competence as being "dependent upon both (tacit) *knowledge* and (ability for) *use*" (1972:282, original emphasis). He identifies various "sectors" of communicative competence, namely possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and performance.

the school by the Principal, whose hospitality and openness to our research was heartening[47].

During our first visit to School X we were exposed to a departmental language support or enrichment programme (henceforth Language Support Programme or LSP) that had been introduced a few months previously. My interest was sparked by the scale of the programme, and by the fact that it was targeted primarily at Xhosa-speaking children, most of whom were struggling with English and Afrikaans as the languages of teaching and learning. Subsequent visits confirmed my impression that the joint departmental/school initiative was worth investigating. Colleagues at PRAESA were supportive of my proposed investigation which, while separate from the broader PRAESA research, would nevertheless feed into it.

For the record it is important to establish that the research into the LSP at School X is my own[48]. It took the following forms:

- an initial visit, with classroom observations of three LSP groups in action
- further classroom observations of four LSP groups
- observations of several whole-class listening skills lessons taught by LSP teachers
- interviews with seven of the LSP staff
- interviews with the principal of the school, and with two regular (class) JP teachers
- submission of the PRAESA Language Profile questionnaire to the school

The question of research *ethics* formed part of the research design from the beginning. Teachers should also benefit from the investigation, as they were the ones who were providing us with the data. A one-way flow of information from the school to the researcher ran the risk of being exploitative, and of perpetuating the traditional researcher/researched divide. Accordingly, we undertook to provide schools with feedback on our research, plus a compendium of relevant readings and educational materials. Class and LSP teachers seemed satisfied with our bona fides and were quite willing to enter into what was a very informal arrangement.

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[47] Findings of the PRAESA research are described in the paper by Bloch et al (1996).
[48] The formal involvement of my PRAESA colleagues Carole Bloch and Gerda de Klerk with respect to the LSP in School X was limited to the following:
• an initial visit each, with attendant classroom observations of a total of 6 LSP groups (and the writing up of these as short reports)
• an interview with one LSP teacher (transcribed)
As most of the LSP groups observed by my colleagues were also observed by me, my use of their reports has been sparing.

5.3. Case Studies

My research into the LSP at School X appears to fit the case-study paradigm, as described below:

> ... the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit - a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs.
> (Cohen & Manion 1994:106-7)

Case studies are at present used widely in educational and social science research (Cohen & Manion 1994:107). While Brown (1988:2) limits their applicability to mostly longitudinal studies of one or a few individuals - the example he mentions is Leopold's famous (1978) research into how his daughter Hildegard acquired a second language - other researchers accord case studies a broader role in educational and social science research.

Central to all case study research is observation, while techniques of data collection are varied and range from qualitative to quantitative (Cohen & Manion 1994:107). Participant and non-participant observation form the two types of observation. The description of the latter type applies in the present instance: "Non-participant observers... stand aloof from the group activities they are investigating and eschew group membership" (ibid). Cohen & Manion posit a typology of observation studies, along two intersecting axes. The horizontal continuum charts the degree of structure in the observational setting, from "natural" on one end to "artificial" on the other. The vertical continuum describes the degree of structure imposed by the observer, from "unstructured" to "structured". Somewhat surprisingly, the authors identify school classrooms as "natural" settings; it seems more appropriate to label them "artificial" and highly structured. This is certainly the case in the LSP classrooms observed at School X, where the teacher's control of classroom interactions, especially in the small withdrawal groups, was almost total.

Among the possible advantages of case studies over other research forms such as surveys and experimental designs are that case studies allow for generalisations, hold the attention of readers for their attention to detail, "recognise the complexity and `embeddedness' of social truths", allow for reinterpretation of their database, are a potential "`step to action'", and present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form - even allowing readers to come to their own conclusions (1994:123).

Pam Christie (1992:191-206)[49] alerts us to the dangers of generalising on the basis of single-case study research. In a useful reflection on methodology with respect to her earlier study into Catholic open schools in South Africa[50], Christie shows the value of comparing condensed case studies of four schools that differ from one another in crucial respects. Christie concedes that in-depth research into a single school may yield important insights. Yet her conclusion remains extremely pertinent for present purposes.

> The time spent in observation and information gathering in the four schools described above was relatively short in comparison with the time that researchers of a single case may spend on naturalistic observations; yet it seems unlikely that the most painstaking and rigorous of investigations could have found a commonality of experience on the dimensions of religion, gender and political expression in the four schools described here. Their points of concern and contestation differed in form and expression, and the content could not simply be generalised across schools. (1992:204-5)

Christie's argument appears entirely valid, more so as her research methodology is perfectly suited to the types of conclusions she is able to reach. One cannot but endorse her cautionary comment on the risks of generalising from a single experience, no matter how detailed and in-depth it might be. Christie's conclusion does, therefore, point to a potential criticism of the present study of the Language Support Programme at School X, namely the absence of comparative data. No comparable situation was taken into account, no contrastive analysis offered - even though this could plausibly have been undertaken. Instead, the LSP at School X was selected as a case study worthy of in-depth treatment. This was done not so much for any inherent interest such a study might have, nor out of any sentimental attachment to the staff or students concerned. Apart from time constraints, the main justification for the present single-case study is a belief in the generalisability of the findings. These relate centrally to the assumptions about language learning and teaching that underlie the rationale and the work of the LSP.

The methodological question raised by the above is the following: What is the basis for claiming that research done in and about *one* school only is representative of what happens in *other* schools if these do not form part of the research design? Put differently, does the claim of generalisability not sound idealist because a-historical, in a philosophical sense?

The answer lies in the nature of the research enterprise itself. For all disclaimers notwithstanding, the present study holds the view that other research findings themselves constitute a relevant context that allows for valid generalisations. Previous chapters have

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[49] Christie, P 1992 'The typical open school? A cautionary comment on case study research'. In Freer, D (ed.) *Towards Open Schools*. Manzini: Macmillan Boleswa.
[50] See Christie 1990.

cited several studies, both local and further afield, that display significant similarities with the situation sketched in this mini-thesis. The purpose of the literature review has been precisely to establish a meaningful broader framework for the subsequent in-depth study. This was done in the firm belief that international and local experiences and theories have a direct bearing on the situation at School X. Language support programmes have been in existence in Great Britain since the 1960s in the context of increasing (im)migration. Debates about the various types of bilingual programmes and their effectiveness have raged for at least a decade-and-a-half in North America and Europe, for three or more decades in post-colonial Africa[51], for almost five decades in the case of India, and were raised as early as the 1930s in South Africa. Research from these experiences, if used judiciously, provides us with the comparable contexts the present study needs in order to arrive at valid generalisations.

Christie's main point remains valid. The best type of educational case-study research is multiple case-study research, because it offers immediate and recognisable points of comparison. In other words, it permits the comparison and contrast of situations with respect to variables identified as significant, within a specific historical location and a single overarching paradigm[52]. A second-best option is to locate in-depth single-case study research within the debates and discussions of the literature in the field. For better or for worse, the latter has been the approach followed in the present study.

To sum up, three key issues pertain to case study research methodology. The first is the question of generalisability across contexts (and hence of the value of the case being studied). A second issue is the compatibility or otherwise of various information-gathering techniques, specifically the codifiability of data gleaned through such different means as questionnaires, teacher interviews, and classroom observation. A third issue, that of ethics, pervades all research and is not limited to case studies. The essence of the ethics issue is how to facilitate an exchange (of information, time, skills, services etc) between researcher and researched that is mutually beneficial (see discussion below).

5.4. Classroom Observation
5.4.1. Theory

Any classroom observation of the teaching and learning process implies a "'faith in the observable'" (Allwright 1988:242). This does not necessarily entail a faith in the measurable, however. In his study of observation in the language classroom, Allwright

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[51] In sub-Saharan post-colonial Africa the language-in education issue has traditionally been formulated as an *either-or* option: *either* mother-tongue instruction, *or* education through the medium of the former colonial language. More recently, this bipolar thinking has been challenged by the notion of additive bi- and multilingual educational models, or simply education for multilingualism.
[52] Christie's own research on Catholic open schools, referred to above, is a model of this kind of study. Her overall paradigm could be described as Gramscian Marxist.

traces the history of the status of observational data in research and in teacher training in Britain since the 1960s. Early beliefs that a `faith in the observable' went hand in glove with a 'faith in the measurable' gave rise to experiments of which the core data was made up of measurements of learner behaviour (ibid:244). Systematic classroom observation became a way of overcoming the impressionistic subjectivity of traditional processes of assessing teaching practice (ibid:246). However, from the mid-1970s the primacy of observational data in the language classroom was increasingly challenged by approaches that focused on the experiences of the language learner (via diaries and `think aloud' data), rather than on the performance of the teacher (ibid:248). Breen in 1985 brought an anthropological view to bear on the language classroom, treating it as a culture in and of itself (ibid:249). While systematic classroom observation remained a valuable tool of teacher training, it was supplemented in Allwright's own work by recordings of learners' own experiences of language learning. Core data thus consisted of a mixture of classroom observation and `mentalistic' procedures, but relying on observation data as central (ibid:252).

> Collection of observational data is obviously central to work in the field. where studies do not have an observational component they suffer from the same interpretation problem what we saw in experimental research in the late sixties. But if is also apparent that observational data are not always expected to suffice on their own. Typically observational data represent the core data for a project, then either alone or in combination with other forms of data.
> (Allwright 1988:254)

Allwright identifies three types of observational data: 1. the systematic observation of learners in controlled non-classroom settings; 2. systematic observation of naturally occurring language classroom events, with virtually no attempts at control; and 3. systematic observation of controlled classroom data (ibid:255). For present purposes, my observational data falls somewhere between 2. and 3. In some instances, withdrawal groups were extremely tightly controlled by the teacher, particular during assessment of the teacher's performance by the LSP Co-ordinator. At other times the atmosphere in the groups was more natural, allowing for a degree of spontaneity on the part of learners.

Two further theories of classroom observation that are particularly suited to case studies appear to have a direct bearing on the research presented here. Each will be described briefly before I examine to what extent my research fits into the respective approaches outlined below. It is important to emphasise that both have a broadly ethnographic orientation and are not incompatible with each other. They do, however, have different foci.

Hornberger (1994:688) provides the following definition of ethnographic research:

> An ethnography - of a community, a classroom, an event, a program - seeks to describe the set of understandings and specific knowledge shared among participants that guide their behavior in that specific context, that is, to describe the culture of that community, classroom, event, or program.

Typical examples of ethnographic studies include research into English reading lessons in bilingual programmes, and a study of how children use L1 knowledge when writing in their second language (ibid). Ethnography takes a holistic and `emic' (culture-specific) view of research, seeking to arrive at a complete picture "that leaves nothing unaccounted for and that reveals the interrelatedness of all the component parts" (ibid). Ethnography attempts to compare and contrast "what people say and what people do" in a given context (ibid) in order to enhance the reliability of the findings. Crucially for our purposes,

> It is not enough for ethnographers to ask teachers about their communicative approach to ESL teaching; they must also observe it in action.
> (Hornberger 1994:688-9)

The one limitation of ethnography is "the insider/outsider dilemma... over how to strike the best balance between insider and outsider perspectives" (ibid). For the researcher this presents itself as the participant/observer dilemma:

> Too much participation by the researcher may change the course of action of the culture, classroom, or event being studied, but too little participation may miss the course of action altogether. (ibid)

Classroom Interaction Analysis may be located within this broadly ethnographic orientation. It lends itself to case study research in the sense that it describes and categorises various aspects of the teaching practices and verbal interactions that take place between teachers and learners in the language classroom (Spada 1994:685). Classroom Interaction Analysis typically employs observation instruments consisting of a list of predetermined, relevant categories of behaviours (ibid). The observer marks the interactive categories as they arise, or later from audio or video recordings and written transcripts of the lesson (ibid). The main value of such an approach is that it describes "what actually goes on in L2 classrooms, refining greatly what we might otherwise think goes on" (ibid:686).

Two criticisms have been directed at Classroom Interaction Analysis. The first is the narrowness of vision occasioned by the fixity of observation categories typically employed by this orientation, and consequent difficulties in accommodating data falling outside the predetermined categories (ibid:687). The second is "that insufficient effort has been devoted to demonstrating that the categories included in L2 observation schemes are valid predictors of learning outcomes" (ibid):

If the interaction analysis approach (or any other approach to classroom observation) is to be of value to the field of ESL education, however, it is simply not enough for researchers to describe what goes on in classrooms. We need to discover what features of instruction are most beneficial to learning. (ibid:687-8)

Armed with these theoretical insights, we now need to examine to what extent they informed my actual research practice.

5.4.2 Practice

In my research I make use of a modified form of Classroom Interaction Analysis in investigating various aspects related to language use in the Withdrawal classes of the LSP. Modified, because although there was no list of predetermined categories to be ticked off on a coding-sheet, I did have a clear agenda when observing classroom interaction. The focus was on how the teacher used and encouraged the use of language/s in the classroom. The most appropriate tool for data-collection that presented itself was note-taking. I took detailed field notes of all interaction in the classroom, seeking to record verbatim exchanges and describing situation and event as accurately as possible. This included non-verbal interactions, and a description of the visual environment. I would word-process my rough notes as soon as possible after the event, with the memory of the lesson still alive.

The open-endedness of this approach does raise the question of whether it constitutes an example of Classroom Interaction Analysis at all. If interaction analysis approaches are characterised by mere description, my research arguably falls outside of it. However, if interaction analysis comprises a range of practices wide enough to include an element of transformation in the sense of informing a larger research, my classroom observations can indeed be viewed as an instance of Classroom Interaction Analysis. This is certainly the approach I wish to defend here. Ironically, it is the very open-endedness of my classroom observation that counters one of the criticisms levelled at this orientation, namely the narrow focus on predetermined categories of investigation.

An ethnographic dictum (see Hornberger, above) that I followed was to diversify the sources of information in order to arrive at a fuller picture. This was attempted by complementing classroom observation with one other data-gathering strategy, namely interviews. Attaining an emic view by "describing the culture as its members understand it" (Hornberger 1994:689) implied entering into the particular approach and the assumptions - that is, the ideology - underpinning the practice of the LSP staff. Given my own, rather different ideological predispositions, this proved to be quite difficult. Attaining an `etic' view was easier: interpreting the transcribed interviews and the observed classroom

practice required assessing the available information against my own presuppositions. The challenge in this regard was to make my own theoretical framework explicit without distorting the emic view beyond realistic measure. In other words, I had to try to prevent my own prejudices from getting in the way of the more "multilayered description" (Hornberger 1994:689) that emerged from the various voices that commented on the LSP experience. Besides the LSP teachers themselves, these voices included the LSP Co-ordinator, the school principal, and some of the junior primary class teachers. The obvious omissions in this regard were the voices of the children who took part in the LSP, and of the parents. These, however, fell outside the scope of the study.

The insider/outsider dilemma described by Hornberger did not present itself in my case. In the classroom situation, there was never any question of my participating actively since to have done so would have interfered unduly in what was, after all, a small-group situation. The LSP staff were most accommodating in granting me access to the Withdrawal classes which took place in fairly confined offices. Given the particular dynamics of teacher-centred lessons and the fact that children were required to operate in their second language, anything except silent non-participation on my part would have been not only intrusive but probably a little overwhelming for the children. Thus my role was restricted to the proverbial "fly on the wall", recording my impressions through field notes.

A technical issue that arose out of this approach was how to record data in a fairly intimate small-group situation. I decided against the use of electronic audio or visual recordings, for two reasons: 1. such apparatus could easily have inhibited both teacher and learners, thereby rendering the classroom situation more artificial; and 2. the purpose of that stage of the research process was not to focus on teacher education, but to gain impressions of language use in the LSP classroom.

5.5. Interviews
5.5.1. Theory

The relative merit of the interview as a research tool in relation to the questionnaire, for example, can be gauged by several factors (Cohen & Manion 1994:272, following Tuckman 1972). Among its advantages are the many opportunities for asking that the interview situation lends itself to, the possibility of probing issues more deeply (ibid), and appropriate speed (ibid:283). Also, the interview has a good rate of return. Disadvantages include the need to have at least one interviewer, the limited number of respondents who can be reached, the numerous sources of error (interviewer, instrument, coding, sample), the limitation on reliability, and the restricted emphasis on writing skill (ibid:272).

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The interview is unusual as a research tool for obtaining its data via direct verbal interaction between individuals (ibid:271-2). Typically, the research interview has one or more of the following three purposes: 1. it is the principal means of gathering information; 2. it is used to test hypotheses; 3. it is used in conjunction with other research methods (ibid:272-3). As we shall see below, purposes 1. and 3. are relevant to my research, which made use of both structured and unstructured interviews. The conception of the interview that suits the present study best, is of "a transaction that inevitably has bias" (ibid:274-5, following Kitwood 1977) but which was initially conceived as "a potential means of pure information transfer" (ibid).

A problem encountered in the research interview is that of reliability versus validity, as described by Kitwood:

> In proportion to the extent to which 'reliability' is enhanced by rationalisation, 'validity' would decrease. For the main purpose of using an interview in research is that it is believed that in an interpersonal encounter people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feelings and values, than they would in a less human situation. At least for some purposes, it is necessary to generate a kind of conversation in which the 'respondent' feels at ease. In other words, the distinctively human element in the interview is necessary to its 'validity'. The more the interviewer becomes rational, calculating, and detached, the less likely the interview is to be perceived as a friendly transaction, and the more calculated the response also is likely to be.
> (quoted in Cohen & Manion 1994:282)

Two of the suggested ways of overcoming the dilemma are to validate the research interview with other measures, and to minimise bias by, for example, careful formulation of questions (ibid). To guarantee systematicity, the authors suggest a certain procedure be followed in conceptualising and giving birth to interviews, which may be paraphrased as follows. Once you decide on the purpose of the research, prepare the interview, keeping in mind what it is you want to find out. Consider which kinds of questions suit your purposes - either open-ended or closed questions, for example (ibid:284). Draw up the questions to reflect the variables you want to measure; then set up and conduct the interview. Find a way of codifying or scoring your data, keeping in mind the problem with open-ended questions. Conduct an analysis of the interview data, beginning with the transcription (ibid:284-6).

5.5.2. Practice

In practice, the process of preparing for and conducting the interviews was a good deal more uneven than any theoretical description. Interviews I was able to prepare for (the majority) were largely structured and ran along the lines described above. Given the clarity of the focus on gaining information and 'transacting bias' on particular points, this

proved to be fairly straightforward. I tried to clarify, as briefly as possible, the nature of the relationship between my own research (for MPhil purposes) and the PRAESA research (see 5.2 above). All of the interviewees appeared quite content with my explanation, and to accept my bona fides unreservedly.

During the interview allowance had to be made for relevant diversions arising out of the teacher's classroom practice. In most cases I was able to draw on my observation of the teacher's lesson in the period prior to the interview in order to elicit certain types of information. For example, the exchange with Teacher A on the place of phonics (see Chapter 8) was completely unplanned, arising out of something I had observed her doing in the withdrawal class. That particular interaction is one of the few in which I allowed my personal biases - in this case a scepticism towards the use of phonics - to intrude overtly upon the course of the interview. The interviewee afterwards made reference to my `agenda', indicating her awareness that something more than a mere exchange of information had taken place.

A few interviews were less planned. For example, it happened more than once that a teacher whose classes I had been observing, spontaneously agreed to answer some questions. By its very nature such an interview was less structured. However, I attempted to keep a clear focus on language issues (as opposed to more general classroom control, for example) in order to sustain continuity with my general line of inquiry. Nevertheless, the open-ended questions were not easily codifiable.

The types of questions I asked in my role as interviewer can be grouped as follows:

1. Requests for basic information requiring mostly a short answer (e.g. "What stories did you do at this the Sub B level?")
2. Closed questions requiring only a yes or no response ("Did you ask them to write that down?")
3. Questions of clarification ("What is Makisi Makili?")
4. Requests for more detailed information or specificity ("How does the relationship between you and the remedial teacher work in practice?")
5. Asking for in-depth views, opinions, assessments ("How does this change the way you think about what you do here?")
6. Taking issue with respondent's views, thereby revealing my own agenda/ bias ("But is that necessarily the case? Sometimes an -a- will change [in sound], depending where it's located [in a word], for example, an apple but a book. It's spelled the same but audially [the -a-'s] are different.")

Choice of language played an important role in setting the tone in the interview. Since I had spent some time observing and informally conversing with a number of the teachers before interviewing them I had a fair idea what their first language was likely to be. In most cases they were given the choice. Some of the Afrikaans first-language teachers nevertheless insisted on speaking English. It is not clear to me whether this was because they believed me to be more comfortable with English (which I am, although I am proficient in Afrikaans), or whether the fact that they conducted their classes in English made it easier for them to talk in the same medium. In the event, of the nine interviews I conducted five were done in English only, two in Afrikaans only, and two in English and Afrikaans.

Research tools included a tape-recorder and a note-pad with the questions, and with room for notes. With the exception of two of the spontaneous interviews, the interviews were tape-recorded, all with the consent of the interviewees. I explained that the interviews themselves would not be published, but used to inform my research. I undertook to forward a copy of the transcription to each of the respondents, for their own records and for any amendments they wished to make.

In transcribing the interviews I took care to record not only verbal utterances but also para-linguistic phenomena such as laughter or heavy emphasis (signalled through use of upper case), in order to derive maximum meaning from the `transaction'. Redundancies and obvious slips and syntax errors were edited out for easier reading.

Codifying the answers proved difficult in view of the wide range of questions asked and the equally wide range of answers received. Emerging themes around the following key issues were identified:

1. Afrikaans
2. Children: effects of language policy & practice on them
3. Classroom management and organisation
4. Codeswitching and use of Xhosa in the classroom
5. Curriculum, including teaching and learning approaches
6. Language problems
7. LSP: origins
8. LSP staff: role and status, conditions of employment
9. LSP: assessing its impact
10. LSP: names given to staff
11. LSP: relations with class teachers
12. LSP: selection of learners
13. Parents
14. Phonics
15. Problems ("The problem is...")
16. Staff profile
17. Stories

18. Support services, including Remediation
19. Teachers' beliefs about language acquisition and learning
20. Teachers' attitudes to varieties, speakers of Xhosa
21. Teachers' suggestions/ideas/hopes/dreams/solutions
22. Theories

While the themes extracted above lend systematicity to the responses, an interview transcript is not an academic treatise. It is the record of an oral transaction between two individuals (in this instance), and relies for its full meaning on an appreciation of the discursive nature of the (oral) event. Bluntly put, this means interviewees sometimes say things off the record which, if recorded, have to be edited out of the transcript. For the researcher, this means proceeding with caution. The manner in which this caution has been encoded here is to protect the identities of the interviewees - a standard practice in social science research[53]. Accordingly they have been called Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C etc., in a consistent manner. Past experience with interviews has shown that teachers are extremely nervous about antagonising their employers, for fear of victimisation or disciplinary action.

The power relationship between interviewer and interviewee is crucial. My own position as an outsider with no authority over the interviewees, but with an obvious interest in their work, and with the status of "university-based researcher", would undoubtedly have influenced the tenor of the interviewees' responses. To what extent signifiers such as `race' and sex may have played a part in shaping the interviewees' responses to my questions is difficult to gauge. Judging by their frankness one may conclude that a measure of trust was established.

For all their obvious virtues, however, interviews in themselves provide only one side of the story. For the researcher interested in finding out what language practice actually occurs in the classroom, a form of classroom observation remains a necessary "reality check". Crucially, classroom observation enables the researcher to see whether the teacher's views correspond to her or his practice. Dicker[54] has cautioned against accepting teachers' views at face value, as teachers do not always do what they say they do. Underlying this hermeneutic of suspicion is the realisation that teachers, despite their best intentions, often fail to live up to their word when it comes to implementing progressive teaching methods in the classroom. The discrepancy arises not out of any dishonesty or desire to mislead, but because teachers find it difficult to distance themselves from their own practice in the hurly-burly of the classroom and to reflect critically on their own practice. In the end, it is the teacher's classroom practice, not an

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[53]See, for example Heath's *Ways with Words* in which the two communities and their inhabitants have been given pseudonyms. Closer to home, research by Young et al (1996) adopts a similar strategem in describing language practice in selected Cape Town schools.
[54] Personal communication, 1995

abstractly-held theory about teaching, which impacts decisively on children's learning. For the researcher classroom observation, whether of the participant or non-participant variety, remains a vital tool to assess the teacher's approach to teaching and learning[55].

5.6. Research Ethics
5.6.1. Theory

The question of *ethics* in my research had to address the traditional and untenable divide between researcher and researched. The divide is untenable because practice and theory stand in a dialectical relationship to each other, a relationship that has to be perpetually strengthened if practice is to improve and theory is to become more relevant and `applied'. A good example of this relationship is the work of the now-defunct Community Education Resources (CER) project at UCT. Born of a strong democratic impulse to contribute to the liberation struggle alongside the oppressed in the 1980s, CER exemplified the ethical dilemma of university-based Marxist intellectuals without a constituency yet with strong political affiliations and the commitment to making progressive academic research accessible at grassroots level.

> 1) We constitute a group of university-based intellectuals that is not directly accountable to mass organisations and that is not in immediate contact with their resource needs.
> 2) We intend to undertake research and produce resource material that will meet carefully defined educational needs within progressive political, community and trade union organisations.
> (CER 1987:2)

The paper calls on progressive educators to conceptualise research with a specific target audience and a precise purpose in mind, mediated through mass democratic organisations. The production of materials would involve critical feedback from the target audience/ organisations in order to meet their specific needs, with academics charged with the task of writing in a more popular style (ibid:25-6). "[This usefulness] is one that can only be determined by the efforts of the researcher to ensure that the content, purpose and form of the material produced meets a real need" (ibid:31). The CER Masters students set an exemplary standard for themselves and other progressive academics to follow. To what extent they achieved the aim of negotiated accessibility of applied research is beyond the scope of this minithesis. Their call remains as relevant today as it did nine years ago.

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[55] If the goal is teacher in-service education, then clearly other more direct means are called for. One such is the use of video-recordings as a more reliable - because `objective' - instrument for observing the teacher's classroom performance, and playing the tape back to the teacher thus observed. That was not the aim of my research, however. I felt that it would have been intrusive to have brought a video camera into a class with which I had not had time to establish a relationship of mutual trust. Besides, reliance on video recordings could well have meant missing out on some learner-teacher and learner-learner interactions.

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Before attempting to answer the question of whether this case study constitutes progressive academic research in the sense identified above, it is necessary to turn briefly to a research approach that emanates from the Northern hemisphere but which shares CER's progressive political engagement. Following Pennycook (1994:690-693), critical pedagogy has three distinguishing features: a focus on questions of social and cultural inequality in education; answerability to a broader politics of transformation; and a critique of positivistic knowledge. By the latter is meant "an attempt to pursue different possibilities of research and a self-reflexivity about the types of knowledge produced by academic inquiry" (ibid:691). Research topics typically focus on questions such as the relationship between L2 education and `race', gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, minority languages, literacy, and cultural difference (ibid:691-2). Concerning the nature of the enquiry, a critical pedagogical approach

> promotes orientations toward research that question the mainstream TESOL approaches to knowledge formation and instead acknowledge the particular social and cultural locations of and political relations between the researcher and the objects/ subjects of research... [It] rejects the grandiose claims of objective knowledge and allows for a greater acknowledgement of personal and cultural location. (ibid:692, 693)

Research approaches would include non-mainstream methods such as narrative, memory-work and genealogy. Common to instances of such politically transformative research is a `perspective from below', that is, one which seeks to empower and work in the interests of the `researched'. In that sense it has much in common with Auerbach's description of *participatory action research*, in which the framing questions are as follows:

1. Who sets the research agenda and determines the research questions?
2. Who is involved in gathering and analyzing data?
3. Whose interests do the outcomes of research serve?
4. Who benefits from the research?
(1994:694)

These questions could have been taken directly from the CER paper. They imply a critical sociological (even Marxist) perspective on research ethics more narrowly, and on the production of knowledge more broadly. Also implied is an emphatic rejection of any notion that research could be a neutral, disinterested pursuit of objective truth. Instead, epistemology is inextricably interwoven with interested positions, and hence with power;

no middle ground is possible[56]. Or, as one writer has put it, even more succinctly, "Whose language? What power?"[57]

In order to judge whether the research constitutes participatory action research, we now need to briefly answer each of the questions posed by Auerbach above.

5.6.2 Practice

1. The research agenda and the research questions were determined by me after initial consultation with colleagues at PRAESA and (prior to that) the NLP, as well as Rama Agnihotri of Delhi University, India. At no stage were the eventual subjects of the research (the LSP staff) asked to contribute to the agenda. This undoubtedly falls short of the ethical guidelines established above.

2. Gathering and analysing data was done by me; again, at no time were the LSP teachers asked to contribute. Besides granting me interview time, some were asked to give feedback on the interview transcripts I sent them; this they duly did. I did not manage to return a transcript to each interviewee, however.

3. The question of whose interests are served by the research outcomes is more difficult to answer. In a direct sense there are no immediate beneficiaries. Should the research outcomes prove useful in helping PRAESA clarify certain issues, it may contribute towards the conceptualisation of the demonstration school in general, and multilingual teaching and learning, in particular. In themselves the outcomes certainly do not serve the interests of the LSP teachers or the school, since the research is not (yet) in accessible form for teachers. In any case many of my findings are critical of the assumptions that inform the programme.

4. Mostly immediately I remain the chief beneficiary of the research. Successful completion of a masters degree would enhance my prospects in the job market. Indirectly, PRAESA stands to gain from having more highly qualified staff equipped with particular research skills. Unless other forms are found of making research such as mine more accessible, however, teachers and parents unfortunately do not stand to benefit from it.

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[56] This view is neatly captured in Habermas' keyword 'knowledge-constitutive interests' (cited in Luckett 1992:3).

[57] The title of Frank Smith's book already referred to in a previous chapter. The book is an admirably self-reflexive account of Smith's turbulent experience as head of the Applied Language Studies department at Wits University and his coordination of a seven-week Honours seminar in 1992.

Clearly, on all four of the grounds above, the research does not qualify as being particularly progressive from an ethical point of view. It does, however, qualify as a form of critical pedagogy. In examining the assumptions about second-language acquisition that undergird the LSP teachers' beliefs and practice, and measuring these against available research findings, this study does after all focus on questions of social inequality as mediated through the language issue in classrooms. How children learn is fundamentally affected by the language medium through which they are taught. And posing critical questions about language practice with a view to transforming teaching and learning is surely integral to critical pedagogy.

Ultimately, however, what matters is not which label is affixed to the research, but whether it can be made useful in some way. In practice, it has to be admitted, my research was not as closely tied to the needs of the researched as I would have liked. The School, and the LSP staff in particular should also have participated in the negotiation of the research project if it were to have been of mutual benefit.

What underlies the descriptive analysis of School X's language profile is a belief in the importance of *context* as a factor in any equation about the quality of learning and teaching. Experiences that are central to learning anywhere may well exist; but they are mediated through a variety of contextual factors, such as large classes, languages of teaching and learning, teacher qualifications, availability of basic teaching and learning resources, and brute facts about language proficiency which cannot be ignored. Ultimately, however, contextual factors have to be balanced by an awareness of learning theory; they can never be an excuse for the researcher not to engage with theories of second-language acquisition and bilingual education, for example. The current chapter should therefore be read against the background of theoretical issues raised in Chapters 2 and 3.

6.1. School X: a language profile[58]

School X is a state-owned primary school situated on the Cape Flats in a newly developed suburb that lies adjacent to an `African' township. Built on ground that was historically declared a `coloured' group area, suburb X has experienced an influx of `Africans', "mostly middle-class, professional people" (Principal 1995). School X is a new school that opened its doors for the first time in late 1993. For less than two years of its existence it fell under the jurisdiction of the now defunct HoR. However, this did not stop large numbers of `African' parents "who don't want their children in Xhosa-speaking schools" (ibid) from enrolling their children at School X.

The school is staffed by 28 teachers, all of whom are bilingual (Afrikaans/ English), with equal numbers of Afrikaans first-language and English first-language speakers, respectively. None of the staff speak any Xhosa.

Table 3

11. How many teachers have the following as their home or first language?			
Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	Other (specify)
14	13	0	None

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[58]As already acknowledged, the questionnaire that was submitted to School X was developed under the aegis of the PRAESA schools-based research. Carole Bloch, Gerda de Klerk and I jointly drew up the questions that were intended to provide us with quantitative data on language practices in particular Western Cape primary schools. In the event, the questionnaire was submitted to two schools only, one of which was School X.

Table 4

12. How many teachers are bilingual?		
Xhosa plus Afrikaans	Xhosa plus English	Afrikaans plus English
0	0	28[59]

Historically, this has been the typical staff language profile of ex-HoR schools in the Western Cape, given the high incidence of Afrikaans/ English bilingualism amongst those formerly classified `coloured'. The figures become significant when compared to the home-language backgrounds of the children, below.

A total number of 876 learners are enrolled at the school, with roughly equal proportions of boys and girls. The average number of pupils per class was given as 36,5 - a misleading figure especially in the lower grades, where classes of between 48 and 55 are common, according to the Principal.

Of particular relevance are the following figures for home-language breakdown:

Table 5

16. What is the approximate breakdown of home languages spoken by pupils? (either in numbers or as percentages)			
Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	(other)
214	230	432	None

When matched with staff language proficiency, these figures are startling for the simple fact that roughly half (49%) of the children are unable to communicate in their home language with staff, whether formally or informally. What is more, there is sufficient reason to believe that the number of Xhosa-speakers is substantially higher than indicated above. Estimates of the proportion of Xhosa-speakers range from between 60% to 70% (Principal), to 80% (Teacher A), and even 90% (LSP Co-ordinator). The most plausible reason for the too-low figures in Table 3 above is that teachers in the English stream did not know the exact numbers of Xhosa-speakers in their classes, and chose to add them to the English-speaking group. While this affects the reliability of the figures, it does not change the fundamental teaching and learning dynamic at School X. The Junior Primary (JP) classes have the following language breakdown:

Table 6

17. How many pupils in each standard have the following as a home language?	Sub A	Sub B	Std 1
Afrikaans	20	20	27
English	55	31	36
Xhosa	80	63	49
other	0	0	0

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[59] The reason for why the figures in Tables 3 and 4 do not add up is not clear to me.

What is apparent from these figures is that in Sub A and Sub B, the number of Xhosa L1 speakers outweighs the combined English/ Afrikaans figure. In Std 1 the Xhosa-speaking group, while accounting for only 44% of the total, nevertheless constitutes the single biggest group. What should be borne in mind is that School X offers two parallel language streams (English and Afrikaans), with approximately three-quarters of the children enrolled in the English stream. According to the questionnaire all the Xhosa-speakers are enrolled in the English stream. Again, this appears to be an exaggeration of the facts, as colleagues and I personally witnessed an Afrikaans-medium LSP group in which the majority of the learners seemed to be Xhosa-speakers. Nonetheless, the trend appears incontrovertible: that Xhosa-speaking parents are enrolling their children in the English stream *en masse* in order for them to learn English. Allowing for some margin of error, there are at least 8 Xhosa-speaking children for every 5 English-speakers in each of the 3 Sub A English-medium classes. In Sub B, the ratio is even more stark (2:1), while in Std 1 an average of 4 out of every 7 children are Xhosa-speaking. For teachers who speak no Xhosa, classroom communication under these conditions has to be a major challenge. I will return to this point later.

As already mentioned, the languages of teaching and learning are English and Afrikaans. Both are offered as subjects. For those in the Afrikaans stream, Afrikaans is offered at L1 level and English at L2 level. In the English-medium stream, English is officially taught as a subject at L1 level, while Afrikaans is taught at L2 level. While these distinctions may exist on paper, they certainly are not adhered to in practice. More important for present purposes is the fact that Xhosa does not feature at all on the school timetable: neither as a LoLT, nor as a subject. This situation has been characterised as "doubly disadvantageous" (PRAESA & School of Education 1996:3):

> Xhosa is often not taught as a subject, let alone offered as a LoTL. Teachers speak little or no Xhosa, and learners speak little or no English or Afrikaans. Textbooks and visual teaching aids such as posters are in English or Afrikaans only, and in many cases are culturally inappropriate.

In terms of bilingual educational models, this situation has also been called "doubly subtractive"[60]. The term takes its origin from the restricted or limited bilingualism (see Chapter 2) that effectively results from most ex-DET primary schooling, where the first language is maintained as a medium for the first four years of schooling only before being replaced by English via a sudden transition in Std 3, with disastrous results.[61] The mother tongue continues to be taught as a subject. Unlike ex-DET schools, however, School X does not offer even this limited form of L1 maintenance and support. Instead, for the Xhosa speakers, School X offers a classic case of submersion in the target language. As

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[60] Heugh 1996, personal communication
[61] See, for instance, MacDonald 1990

we have seen in the literature, this environment is seldom conducive to learning. In fact, it is a virtual guarantee of failure.

6.2. Speech and Hearing Services (SHS), Western Cape: a brief history

On the face of it the history of the Cape Education Department's Speech and Hearing Services (SHS) has no direct bearing on our discussion of language policy in education. SHS, after all, form part of the larger umbrella of medical and para-medical support services provided by the provincial education department to schools in the Western Cape, with equivalents in the other provinces. Traditionally, their primary function has been one that is ancillary to the provision of education in schools, namely to identify students with learning difficulties related to speech and/or hearing problems and providing or recommending appropriate treatment or placement. However, a brief overview of the role of the SHS or the Language Assistance Service (LAS) (Western Cape), as it has been known since the amalgamation of the various education departments in 1994/95, is nevertheless important for our purposes. This is because the LAS, through its small task force of itinerant teachers, has exerted influence on the language practices at a number of schools in the Western Cape. Its activities at one particular school in a lower middle-class suburb of Cape Town form the basis of the present case study .

The Speech and Hearing Services of the Western Cape Education Department were established at a time when education in South Africa had enforced apartheid between black and white learners in all but name. The origins of the SHS go back to 1933 when Scot Mary Gilchrist (later Kihn), in response to a request by the Cape Education Department (CED) and the National Council for the Deaf, taught her first class for partially-hearing pupils in the mainstream (SHS 1983:11). Kihn remained in the service of the CED from 1936 to 1955, teaching `white' children (through the medium of English) into the era of formal apartheid after 1948. Afrikaans-medium services were provided by Ora van Minnen, who joined Kihn in June 1937. Initially all training of teachers took place in Britain; this changed in 1939 on Kihn's request that the CED provide training locally. A specialised course was introduced at Stellenbosch University, and included lectures on how to make teachers aware of symptoms and equip them to assist learners with speech and hearing impediments. Because many of the hearing-impaired children were in mainstream schools all over the region, the specialist teachers were forced to become itinerant (LSP Co-ordinator 1995). For example, an itinerant speech correctionist treated 50-60 stutterers in 1939. By 1940 the service had expanded to Port Elizabeth and Kimberley. In 1941 the University of Cape Town (UCT) offered its first diploma in Special Education: Speech- and Hearing Impediments, taught by Kihn.

By 1946 24 itinerant SHS teachers were reaching 2179 learners in 85 schools (SHS 1983:12). The Centre for the Hard of Hearing was established in 1953 at the Institute for the Deaf in Woodstock for people of all ages and `races' - a notable development in the light of the coming to power in 1948 of the National Party and the subsequent enforcement of apartheid in every sphere, particularly education (and not excluding the health services!). The question of the extent to which the para-medical services in the Cape enjoyed a measure of freedom from institutionalised racism in the early years of apartheid goes beyond the scope of this study. In 1958 the Mary Kihn School for the Partially Deaf was established in Mowbray.

Over time the itinerant SHS teachers broadened their service to include "children with articulation problems, mispronunciations and so on" (LSP Co-ordinator 1995). In this way the language assistance service developed out of the medical orientation of the SHS services. As LSP Co-ordinator puts it, "The focus has moved from hearing impairment to the language. The need to educate is a language need." In 1977 SHS teachers became more involved with school clinics, and in-service training for teachers on language problems was provided (SHS 1983:15). The significance of this lies in the increasing role that SHS would play in impacting more directly on the learning process in schools, particularly with regard to language. Meanwhile, a full-time remedial teacher was appointed by the CED. By 1980 more in-depth diagnostic testing had begun, and excellent liaison between speech & hearing teachers and remedial teachers was reported (ibid:15). Itinerant language teachers, amongst others, reportedly promoted "great differentiation and individual attention" at schools (ibid:15).

According to LSP Co-ordinator, who in 1982 was appointed a CED subject adviser, the service is part of the departmental Educational Support Services in the Western Cape. Historically SHS/LAS existed only in the CED schools (i.e. `white'). Since the amalgamation of the various education departments (tricameral plus DET and DET-equivalents) into one department in 1994, SHS/LAS undertook to expand into the other ex-departments (LSP Co-ordinator 1995). This meant that, for the first time, all schools in the province would be entitled to Western Cape Education Department (WCED) support services, comprising remedial teachers, psychologists, special teachers, as well as SHS/LAS. In practice, however, only a few schools of the former HoR could be taken on board, primarily because with a total of only 44 teachers SHS/LAS was under-resourced to meet the need. LSP Co-ordinator recounts: "When I got the figures for the ex-HoR schools, I was in shock because the figures were so huge." In the following extract she explains the scope of the challenge facing the SHS.

> About 56 of the ex-CED schools in the Western Cape have language interventions. We have 18 posts in the southern suburbs. With limited staff numbers, one person can at most do four schools. The schools under the former HoR department are

much bigger than the former CED schools. 13 of the 17 primary schools in the Kuils River area have more than 1000 pupils. I have only 2 teachers servicing 102 000 pupils in the entire area stretching from Laingsburg across Worcester to the coast at Hermanus, as far as Albertinia. I've requested 11 more posts. I've no idea whether I'll get them. You have to do as best as you can with the staff at your disposal.
(LSP Co-ordinator 1995)

These specialist teachers are trained in a post-graduate *Diploma in Spesiale en Buitengewone Onderwys (Gehoorgestremdheid)* which is offered at Stellenbosch University (LSP Co-ordinator 1995). The course is intensive and expensive, and caters for no more than 12 candidates per year. According to LSP Co-ordinator, diplomas in the various branches of the discipline of what is becoming known world-wide as Learners with Special Educational Needs - Mainstream (LSENM) may be merged into one diploma at Stellenbosch. This would cater for learners with hearing impediments, mild epilepsy, mild cerebral palsy, mild visual problems, acuity problems, amongst others (LSP Co-ordinator 1995). For SHS the focus is auditory perception, or what programme staff call language and listening skills. LSP Co-ordinator admits, however, that the course does not equip the specialist teachers to address the challenges they now face, particularly in the ex-HoR schools where increasing numbers of incoming learners do not speak the language/s of teaching and administration. In practice this amounts to large numbers of Xhosa-speaking learners enrolling at historically-`coloured' schools where the medium is either English only, or parallel English/Afrikaans and where the teachers speak no Xhosa. With reference to such situations, LSP Co-ordinator concedes, "Here we are looking at massive language needs. But that's not what [the specialist teachers] have been trained for." The issues raised by this apparent anomaly will be explored more fully in the next chapter.

The issue of remedial teaching remains far from uncontroversial, however, particularly where it is linked to the language factor. This was implicitly acknowledged by the Gauteng Education Department in March 1995 when a spokesperson identified the issue of remedial classes as "very sensitive" because it singled out children from disadvantaged communities (SAIRR 1996:146). Accordingly, schools had been requested to halt all remedial classes until another solution could be found (ibid).

6.3. Withdrawal classes: British beginnings

In her narrative account of the changing educational scene in early 1960s England, Levine (1990:14-16) describes the origins and motivation behind the withdrawal classes. In response to increasing linguistic diversity in mainstream English classrooms and the overt racism encountered by immigrant children, well-intentioned English teachers saw the need to go beyond remediation in special classes (the first response), to separate

Special English Lessons. This suited mainstream teachers, who could get on with 'business as usual' with their `normal' children. The early provisions are described by Levine thus:

> At the beginning, teachers visited as many as three or four schools in a week, with students going to special English lessons in accordance with the teacher's time in school. For specialist language teachers the question of how best to organize their time with `their' students has always been a perennial one. How could they `cover' all the children in need? Which students were to be withdrawn?... teaching groups were selected according to pupils' level of English (to be as homogeneous as possible), not according to age, mother tongue, friendship groups, or mainstream curriculum need.
> (Levine 1990:15)

Tthe partial withdrawal from `normal' lessons for immigrant children constituted a process of marginalisation for both the students and the `special' English teachers. The latter chose to focus on the "rescue aspect of the operation" (ibid:16). By the end of the 1960s, in response to ever increasing numbers of beginner learners of English in inner city schools, the special language service concentrated on work with beginners. The authorities established off-site language centres to cater for the increased numbers.[62] Levine sums up the "features of the legacy of separatism" thus:

- the newcomers as `inferior' students;
- `lack of English' being equated with `having no language';
- `special' English as a dumping ground;
- `special' English as a haven;
- virtually no structural opportunities for pupils to get to know each other on equal terms;
- virtually no structural opportunities for teachers from mainstream and withdrawal constituencies to interact, and hence, suspicion of each others' roles;
- special language teachers outside the school structure left to fend for themselves, organize their own use of time. (1990:16)

It is uncanny how closely the withdrawal classes conducted at School X fit this pattern, as we will see below.

6.4. Operationalising the Language Support Programme at School X
6.4.1 Origins

As already mentioned, in view of the amalgamation of the various ex-departments in 1994/5 the Education Support Services of the WCED came under pressure to extend its services to those departments previously denied them. Not knowing which way to turn in the face of the massive need for assistance, LSP Co-ordinator asked the District School

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[62] Note the parallels to the Saturday schools and other English enrichment programmes in townships and cities in South Africa designed to compensate for the English-language `deficits' of students.

Clinic of a historically `coloured' township for advice. Through its work in the area the Clinic was well placed to identify needy ex-HoR schools and recommended School X, a new school with particular challenges facing it. As described above, School X had the most urgent need for assistance as its staff experienced enormous communication difficulties with the large proportion of Xhosa-speaking learners. Via the mediation of the subject adviser and school psychologist at X, the Principal invited the Clinic staff and the LAS staff to a joint meeting with the junior primary (JP) staff and the Remedial staff at School X. Following the initial meeting the LAS staff agreed to take on the JP classes (Sub A to Std 1), with the Clinic continuing to be responsible for the SP classes (Std 2 to Std 5).

There were two immediate obstacles to be overcome, however. One involved the question of a needs assessment for the programme. LSP Co-ordinator (1995) explains the difficulty:

> Some of the teachers thought we should do a needs assessment. But how were we going to test or evaluate children who could not speak the medium of instruction? So I said that the need was for massive assistance.... When the Remedial teachers [from the Clinic] wanted to evaluate the JP kids I said that there wasn't much point in testing them because you weren't going to get any reliable scores.

What is immediately apparent from the quotation above is LSP Co-ordinator's realisation that the traditional SHS approach of diagnostic/ psychometric testing to check for speech and hearing impairments was wholly inappropriate in a context in which language itself was at issue. It also illustrates that the LSP saw itself as ameliorating the school's plight. The comment above also illustrates clearly that the origins of SHS lie in schools in which only a minority of learners are unable to cope with the learning demands of the curriculum - in other words, where LoLT is not at issue. This is confirmed by the LSP staff, who all "itinerate" elsewhere, at clinics or Model C schools in addition to their day at School X. I will return to this issue later.

6.4.2. Parents' beliefs about languages

Parental scepticism constituted the second obstacle to the smooth implementation of the LSP at School X. In response to my question as to whether there was any feeling of resentment at being taught by `white' teachers, the Principal explained why there was initial opposition to the programme:

> It was mostly the parents. In the beginning of the year, before the elections, tensions were high on either side. After the elections emotions went down. Parents felt that we were bringing in white teachers to tell their children that they were stupid. I had to explain that these teachers were not doing anything negative. I had to explain that

because of their child's lack of English background, these people would assist their child to learn in English. That caused me to call another meeting with the parents. They saw it as another political move from somewhere - from the Nationalist government, or whatever - and I had to stand my ground. They saw that if people come in for 4 hours a week there is not much brainwashing that they can do. The parents accepted it on those grounds.
(Principal 1995)

The cause of discontent identified by the Principal is parents' perception of racism on the part of the education authorities. This is hardly surprising, given the pernicious history of apartheid and the racist campaign run by the National Party in the Western Cape in the run-up to the democratic elections of April 1994 (and beyond). Parents' reluctantly-given consent to the language intervention is attributable to a belief that, at worst, the damage of such little exposure (four hours per week) would be minimal.

The Principal's argument in favour of the programme raises what is perhaps the most fundamental issue in any analysis of the LSP: the fact that it is run largely through the medium of English for a majority of Xhosa speaking learners. That the programme is also available through the medium of Afrikaans for the minority of children enrolled in the Afrikaans stream illustrates that LSP is there to undergird the LoLTs on offer at the school. As the Principal's words show, however, this should not obscure the obvious, namely that LSP is fundamentally about increasing Xhosa-speakers' access to English - at the expense of the home language/s.

With the consent of a sceptical parent-body, the LSP got underway at School X in early 1995. After an initial experimental period, the Principal requested LSP Co-ordinator to sustain the JP programme for the duration of the year (Principal 1995).

Parents[63] had in the same period exerted decisive influence on the school's language policy with regard to Xhosa. In what can aptly be described as "the drive for high-status languages", a large number of parents objected to the presence at the school of a Xhosa-speaking trainee teacher who had been given a temporary appointment by the Principal in order to provide first-language support in the Junior Primary classes. The parents in question were mostly Xhosa-speaking themselves, and were determined to rid themselves of everything that smacked of the impoverished and discredited DET system - including mother-tongue instruction. The Principal explains:

> *Interviewer: Earlier in the year you mentioned that you had employed a Xhosa teacher, but that due to parental pressure you had to fire the person.*

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[63] Parents' views were not canvassed as part of this research, but relayed to me by the Principal and the LSP staff. They merit attention because they form an important variable in the language equation.

Principal: Not really fire. Yes, I did get some pressure from the Xhosa-speaking parents. Their feeling was they did not want their children to be educated in the Xhosa language. It's enough for them to speak Xhosa at home. Because they look ahead. There is no university in South Africa that can offer subjects right up to Masters level in Xhosa. They want their children to be educated in English, or to be literate in English. They put pressure on me not to employ Xhosa teachers because then it would perpetuate what has happened in the DET schools. They don't want to hear about Xhosa as a medium of instruction.

   The teacher had to leave because she failed English in her third year. So I could only employ her for the first three months. It was her first year of teaching. I employed her because of her ability to speak Xhosa. The Department notified me in March that she had failed her English. She was temporary. They instructed me that her salary would only be paid up to the end of March. Even though I wanted to keep her on for another month or two, it would have meant that we would pay her.

Whether or not the presence of the Xhosa-speaking teacher was designed to lead eventually to the increased use of Xhosa in the curriculum (e.g. as a language subject or even as a LoLT) remains unclear to me. What does emerge clearly, even forcefully from these lines is one of the most pernicious and tragic legacies of Verwoerdian Bantu Education[64]: the disregard for (South) African languages by the users of those languages themselves. The hatred of home-language education and of the impoverished curriculum of DET education finds its expression in the parents' rejection of a Xhosa mother-tongue speaker employed by the school for the sole purpose of providing first-language support for their children. The situation is tragic in two ways. It reveals how African people have internalised the racist myths perpetrated by apartheid propaganda about the supposed inferiority of indigenous (endoglossic)[65] languages. And it shows the processes by which 'African' people, in particular, have come to choose those educational options which are least likely to lead to empowerment for their children. Common-sense notions of the current superior market value of English are widespread and well founded; and the perception of parents' favourable attitudes to English as described by the principal is ultimately unsurprising. Furthermore, it is common cause that textbooks and other educational materials are not available in the African languages beyond Std 2. The challenges in creating an awareness of the educational issues involved in language policy decisions are clearly enormous. Ideas for change will be addressed in the final chapter.

LSP staff confirmed that Xhosa-speaking parents' ambitions for their children were responsible for parents' rejection of Xhosa in favour of the high-status languages of English and, to a lesser extent, Afrikaans. This was particularly noticeable in the high enrolment in the English-medium stream.

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[64] See Chapter 4 for an overview of language-in-education policy in the era of apartheid.
[65] Cf Kaschula & Anthonissen (1995: 114): "When a language is the native language of all or most of the population of a region, it is said to be endoglossic."

These are parents who have ambitions for their children. If they go into tertiary education, the language medium is going to be English or Afrikaans, certainly not Xhosa.
(LSP Co-ordinator)

A frequently heard complaint by the LSP staff was that Xhosa-speaking parents were wrong in mostly placing their children in the English-medium stream without due regard for their children's language proficiency. "Parents want Xhosa children to be in the English class, even if the child's Afrikaans is better than her English" (Teacher E). Several teachers felt that Xhosa-speakers would be better off in the Afrikaans-medium stream, a view underlined by the following comment during an evaluation meeting of LSP staff and JP teachers: "Die Afrikaans Xhosas vorder vinniger as die Engelse Xhosas" ("The Afrikaans Xhosas are progressing more quickly than the English Xhosas" - Teacher D). At the same meeting one of the JP teachers concurred, since many Xhosa children knew more Afrikaans than English. But she reminded those present that while it would be preferable to have more children in the Afrikaans stream, it was the parents' choice and staff would not be able to prescribe to the parents[66]. Another teacher agreed and said it was the parents' idea to place their children in a coloured school. Parents did not think of it as an English or an Afrikaans school, but as a coloured school. This appeared to irk her. Teacher H felt that as teachers they were professionals who could inform the parents about the educational implications of placing their children in particular streams. Another JP teacher agreed and said teachers should talk with parents to get them to place their children in the Afrikaans stream rather than in the English one. This recognition of teachers' sense of professional responsibility towards parents and, thereby, to the children is a hopeful sign that morale amongst teachers may not be uniformly low everywhere. While the concern to place Xhosa children in one or the other stream may go a little way to ameliorating the worst learning difficulties Xhosa-speakers may face, it does of course not address the more fundamental issue of home-language teaching and learning.

All staff interviewed mentioned the difficulty of communicating with Xhosa-speaking parents, most of whom did not see the need for themselves to be involved in the life of the school. At Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings 70% of the `coloured' parents would be present, but very few of the `African' parents (Principal). For the LSP teachers communication with parents was practically non-existent. One parent was indignant at the presence of `white' teachers at a `coloured' school, according to Teacher A, but the Principal "saw him right".

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[66] Parents' antipathy towards Afrikaans should be understood against the background of popular rebellion against the use of Afrikaans in `African' education since 1976 (see Chapter 2 above).

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On the whole the attitude of the LSP staff to the language dynamic was pragmatic. Confronted with the *fait accompli* of parental choice, LSP teachers did as best they could under difficult circumstances. Whether or not they were in a position to accommodate Xhosa in the classroom had parents been more open to the idea, is another issue altogether. In effect parents' attitudes were not at variance with those of the basic assumptions of the LSP. Both believed in target-language submersion programmes to address a perceived deficit in children. Despite the obvious lack of communication between parents and LSP staff, their agendas dovetailed in significant respects.

6.4.3. LSP staff profile

Given the scale of the (imprecisely-defined) need at School X, LSP Co-ordinator agreed to deploy a complement of seven SHS teachers on an itinerant basis. All seven were already itinerant SHS teachers employed by the WCED. Their previous experience was for the most part limited to Afrikaans-medium and English-medium (now ex-) Model C schools and clinics with none or only a small minority of African-language speakers. All the staff were responsible for between two and three other schools or clinics. One of the staff was inexperienced, only in her second year of teaching; the others could be called experienced teachers, all with more than three years' teaching experience.

All of them were women. Why?

> It's not really something men take to. And there are no promotion opportunities. Yet people seem to experience tremendous job satisfaction, because they stay. It's the exceptional cases who leave. Many of them have young children of their own, and are interested in children's language development. (LSP Co-ordinator)

I did not obtain a detailed breakdown of academic qualifications from the staff. From the interviews it became apparent, however, that most of the LSP teachers had become Speech and Hearing teachers after having completed a degree plus the DSBO (Diploma in Special Education) course at Stellenbosch University, or its equivalent at the University of Cape Town. For all of them it was their first exposure to the "massive language need" of an ex-HoR school with a majority intake of children who could not use the LoLT.

6.4.4. Nature and scope of the LSP

The overarching goal of the LSP was to assist class teachers at School X to cope with the "large percentage of Xhosa speaking children [who] had been enrolled. The teachers were in need of assistance" (Teacher A's Report, 1995). Some of the implications of this deceptively simple statement will be explored in what follows.

The nature of the LSP intervention was essentially one of academic (i.e. learner) *support*, as opposed to academic (i.e. institutional) *development*. While the terms originated in tertiary education, they are readily transferable to primary education. Thus *support* refers to supplemental instruction aimed at helping learners cope at a particular level after admission to the institution. *Development*, on the other hand, refers to programmes that centrally attempt transformation of the teaching-learning environment by focusing on staff development, curriculum reform, and the democratisation of the institution (Plüddemann 1994:2). In so doing, *development* rejects the deficit approach to learning implied by *support* in favour of a developmental approach that values the knowledge and experiences of learners.

There is of course nothing wrong with supporting a learner's language, whether first or second. On the contrary: it is to any school's credit if it musters additional resources in attempting to help those who struggle with the language/s of teaching. However, language support is more meaningful in contexts in which learners' home languages are validated by the education system, than where they are implicitly viewed as obstacles to learning. In other words, L1 support is potentially additive, whereas L2 support of the type offered by the LSP is essentially remedial/ deficit in orientation. The tragedy of a situation such as the one at School X is that parental opposition has proved to be a crucial constraint in attempts to meaningfully develop the children's potential. To put it bluntly, those (mostly but not exclusively) Xhosa-speaking learners who could not speak the school's language were seen by both the school and the parents as the problem to be remedied. Learners had to adjust to the school, not the other way around.

Of the seven LSP staff six were allocated to the English-medium stream, and one to the Afrikaans-medium stream at School X. Three LSP staff were responsible for Sub A, two for Sub B, and one for the Std 1 classes in the English stream. Given the smaller numbers in the Afrikaans stream, the LSP teacher took combined Sub A/ Sub B, and Std 1 groups, respectively.

Organisationally, the intervention centred on pull-out or withdrawal groups, with an additional period of whole class teaching (listening skills) by the LSP teacher. One morning per week the itinerant teachers would each take 3 or 4 pull-out or withdrawal groups in succession from their `feeder' class and instruct them for between 20 and 30 minutes. The groups each consisted of between 5 and 10 learners whom the class teacher considered the weakest in her class - mostly the Xhosa speakers. After the group sessions the LSP teacher would take over a lesson of the whole class in which she would reinforce and repeat some or all of the activities done in the groups (again, no more than 20 to 30 minutes). As the class teacher was in attendance, the situation lent itself to a cross-fertilization of ideas. Reasons for why this did not happen in practice are discussed

below. By break-time (10.20) the LSP intervention would be over for another week. In this way roughly one-third of all children in the JP classes were exposed to the LSP withdrawal groups[67].

6.4.5. Selection of learners

"The worst" (LSP Co-ordinator) children were selected by the respective class teacher at the beginning of the year, assisted in one instance by LSP Teacher E. Group `membership' was determined by children's fluency in the LoLT:

> *Interviewer: How did the groups come to be divided into a top group, a middle group, and a bottom group?*
>
> Teacher E: In the beginning of the year we took them mixed. We divided the class into three groups of, say, ten each. The teacher told us which ones should come to us because they couldn't speak English. It's the Xhosa-speaking children. There are Xhosa-speaking children [in my groups] who are repeating Sub A. We took them like that for about a term. Then we knew, from their responses in class, which children were weaker. I went home and redivided them into three groups, and then asked the class teacher to help me. We shuffled them a bit. She helped me. Even though I did not always agree with her I thought she should also have her input. I still think I would prefer to put some in the middle group and others in the bottom group, but because it was her decision as well it doesn't really matter all that much. The top group stands out because they are also brighter, receptive language is better. [This arrangement] works better because all the children are on the same level. But a disadvantage is that if they don't know something, there isn't one of the brighter children to help them.

This perceptive comment about the dilemmas of streaming shows, amongst other things, how easily the Xhosa-speaking children - as indeed the whole LSP intervention - could have become stigmatised. That it appears not to have been thus stigmatised is probably a function of the unparallelled status of English, which the programme was seen to be promoting. In the case of each of the two English-medium Sub B classes, the class teacher selected the 5 `weakest' children plus the 10 `near-weakest'. Teacher A took the latter groups, while Teacher B was saddled with those least proficient in English. In terms of curriculum it meant that "the stronger groups were able to go on to communication earlier" (Teacher B).

6.4.6. Role and status of LSP staff

The position of the LSP teachers at School X was not without its complications and confusions, especially at the beginning. Despite the warmth and openness shown by the

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[67] The reader is referred back to the startling parallels in Levine's (1990) account of the beginnings of withdrawal classes in Britain in the 1960s.

Principal, LSP Co-ordinator spoke of the "awkward situation" in which she found herself as a result of the traditionally poor co-operation between HoR schools and the Department. Accordingly, she "kept a very low profile" (LSP Co-ordinator) at School X, making it difficult for her to monitor the progress her staff were making.

Apart from initial opposition from parents (see above), the exact role and status of LSP staff at the school appeared not to have been fully clarified until well into the year. Witness the confusion over names: in the course of a single interview the Principal, despite expressing his satisfaction with the programme, referred to LSP staff by no less than seven (!) different names: `assistants'; `language teachers'; `language therapists'; `speech and hearing teachers'; `speech and language teachers'; `speech teachers'; and, rather damningly, `those ladies - those teachers'. This profusion of terms highlights a degree of conceptual unclarity over the precise function and role of the LSP staff. To some extent this is understandable, given the novelty of the intervention. Repeated comments such as "[n]owhere is there any model to base our work on" (LSP Co-ordinator), "we were starting from scratch" (Teacher A), and "I didn't know where to begin" (Teacher B) testify to the initial uncertainty in the minds of the LSP staff.

Even taking into account these teething problems, the position of the programme in relation to other support services at the school appears to have been less than clear. For example, the LSP teachers had no contact with the school's Remedial teacher. Teacher A, for one, was aware that serious reading problems were referred to the Remedial teacher. But a lack of coordination meant she had no idea what the Remedial teacher did with the children. A more sanguine perspective was offered by the Principal, who saw the function of the LSP staff as

> helping [the Remedial teacher] lighten her burden. For her it's a great help. She is not bogged down with 15-20 children in each standard, but can focus on the 3 or 5 or 8 that really need her services. (Principal 1995)

This statement is startling for implying a large degree of overlap between the LSP and the Remedial teacher's work, without the knowledge of either. Two possible interpretations suggest themselves: either the Remedial teacher was doing some of the English / Afrikaans language enrichment work in the name of remediation, or the LSP language enrichment work was remedial in orientation. Either interpretation rests on a deficit approach to language learning, by which is meant an approach that locates the knowledge lack or *deficit* exclusively in the learner.

A further difficulty was the absence of a budget for teaching and learning materials: neither the department nor the school made any provision for teaching aids such as books, posters, stationery, charts and the like. This meant that LSP staff had to make

photocopies on the sly at their other schools, or alternatively pay out of their own pockets (Teacher B).

As mentioned above, the role of the LSP staff was to assist the class teachers in coping with the large Xhosa-speaking contingent by providing the Xhosa speakers with small-group ESL/Afrikaans Second Language instruction. It comes as a surprise to learn, therefore, that coordination with the class teachers was fraught with difficulties and tensions. That, at least, was the message I got from interviewing the LSP teachers themselves, and one class teacher. The Principal saw it differently. "At first [the class teachers] were sceptical. Now you won't find a better combination of the class teachers and the Speech and Hearing teachers" (Principal). Underlying this optimism was the belief that the LSP constituted a form of in-service training for the class teachers, "an ongoing co-operation" (ibid). LSP Co-ordinator had not encountered any racism from the school's staff, "who are very appreciative and cooperative".

However, most of the LSP staff felt that while they got on with their respective class teacher, coordination might have been better. Teacher A noted that "class teachers say they have no time to reinforce what we do", that they sometimes "don't know what's going on" in their own classes, and "feel threatened" by the LSP staff; that this also had to do with the "political history" of the country (Teacher A) - this last a reference to the inferiority complexes and deference to `whites' that apartheid produced in the minds of sections of the oppressed. This assessment is borne out by one of the class teachers herself, who said,

> Due to race and class factors teachers feel inferior to the language assistants. You think they know everything because you have no experience with children like that (Teacher H 1995)

- little realising, perhaps, that none of the LSP teachers had any experience with groups of Xhosa-speaking children.

One LSP teacher (E) described relations with the class teachers as "quite tense", citing a particular incident in which a teacher complained because she did not receive the same materials and teaching input from the LSP as her colleague in the same standard. Teacher E said she did not know whether `her' class teacher had time to do the follow-up work suggested by herself, partially because of the pressure of attending numerous meetings and in-service courses during school hours. Similar sentiments were expressed by both Teacher B and Teacher A, who voiced criticism over the lack of critical feedback from the class teachers; Teacher A received "only positive" comments. Teacher B said her class teacher did not follow up what she did in the withdrawal groups, despite frequent informal meetings. Both Teacher A and Teacher B said they were extremely careful not to

prescribe to the class teacher. Teacher C (Std 1) lamented the fact that she did not work on the same themes as the class teacher, due to a lack of coordination. One LSP teacher felt teachers were demotivated (Teacher F). This is understandable in the light of the continued uncertainty surrounding the fate of many teachers in Western Cape schools who are facing rationalisation and retrenchment from their posts.

To sum up this point it seems fair to say, therefore, that while relations between the LSP staff and the class teachers were tolerable and even congenial at times, mutual trust and effective coordination between the two groups was distinctly lacking. A number of LSP staff pointed to the need for improved communication and for meetings to work out joint programmes that fitted into the regular syllabus in a more integrative way.

Having sketched the origins and the early difficulties of the programme, we now need to turn to the LSP teachers' approach to second language acquisition and language learning to discover whether labels such as "deficit model" are adequate descriptors.

Chapter 7 LSP APPROACHES TO SECOND-LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The Language Support Programme (LSP) at School X raises a whole host of questions about its viability and effectiveness, its impact on teaching and learning, and about perceptions around the programme by all the role-players, namely the learners themselves, the LSP staff, the regular staff, the remedial staff, and the parents. However, none of these have been central to the present study. What is at the core is the set of assumptions about second-language development that informed the reasoning and practice of the LSP staff. These will be measured against the Whole Language Principles identified below, within the contextual constraints faced by the programme, such as teachers' language proficiencies, the (un)availability of textbooks and other teaching aids, and the role of parents.

7.1. Whole Language Principles

Freeman & Freeman (1992:7) list seven principles of the philosophy of Whole Language. It has found its expression in what they call "a grass roots movement centered in classrooms" (ibid: 4). The principles are contrasted with a set of Commonsense Assumptions about Bilingual Learners, as follows:

Commonsense Assumptions	Whole Language Principles
1. Learning proceeds from part to whole	1. Learning proceeds from whole to part.
2. Lessons should be teacher centered because learning is the transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the student.	2. Lessons should be learner centred because learning is the active construction of knowledge by the student.
3. Lessons should prepare students to function in society after schooling.	3. Lessons should have meaning purpose for students now.
4. Learning takes place as individuals practice skills and form habits.	4. Learning takes place as groups engage in meaningful social interaction.
5. In a second language, oral language acquisition precedes the development of literacy.	5. In a second language, oral and written language are acquired simultaneously.
6. Learning should take place in English to facilitate the acquisition of English.	6. Learning should talk place in the first language to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of English.
7. The learning potential of bilingual students is limited.	7. Learning potential is expanded through faith in the learner.

Table 7

How do these two sets of assumptions help us understand the approaches to language and learning of the LSP? In what follows each of the topics dealt with below will be examined in the light of the Whole Language principles listed above.

7.2. Beliefs about second-language development

LSP staff hold a number of inter-related views on second-language development. Canvassed in the course of interviews, they point to several common assumptions about the cognitive and social conditions for second-language learning in early childhood:

1. that children's home language is a problem;
2. that submersion into English is best for second-language learning;
3. that listening skills form the basis of all language learning
4. that the second language is best acquired through listening, imitation and pattern drills;
5. that only the standard variety and the standard pronunciation are permitted when learning the new language;
6. that the `first-language first' principle applies to `white' children, but not to `African' children

Each of these will be briefly illustrated and discussed.

7.2.1. The home language (Xhosa) as the problem

This type of belief is introduced by the clause, "The problem at School X is...". School X's problem was defined by LSP staff as Xhosa-speakers' inability to understand and use the LoLT (English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans) in a context in which the teachers knew no Xhosa. Some quotations illustrate how "the problem" was perceived by staff:

1. "we...work with the children who have no language" (Teacher B)
2. "ons werk met die Xhosa kinders wat geen taal het nie" (Teacher C)
3. "[the Xhosa-speakers] are coming in at such a retarded level" (Teacher A)
4. "But certainly [the Xhosa-speakers] would always be behind by virtue of the foreign language [i.e. English]" (Teacher A)
5. "The problem with such a high intake of Xhosa speakers is that they keep on speaking Xhosa to one another." (LSP Co-ordinator)
6. "There is this huge problem as Xhosa children can't speak or understand English. As a result, they were very traumatised, especially at the beginning of the year." (Teacher G)
7. "because of the plus-minus 80% enrolment of Xhosa-speakers here [the School] had a big problem" (Teacher A)
8. "Our teachers are not equipped to teach children coming from a Xhosa home, in an English environment." (Principal)
9. "A big problem is that they babble on with their friends in the playground, so they don't practice their English. We can't stop them. The teachers try to get a Xhosa child sitting next to an English child, but there are too many of them, so they speak Xhosa to each other in class as well." (LSP staff)

10. "The teacher said initially that the children did not seem to understand what to do in the classroom." (Teacher A)
11. "The problem is that English is heard only in school, not at home; [learning English is] not going to be successful" (Teacher B)
12. "Because it's so difficult for us to adjust to the language [i.e. Xhosa], we feel we've made lots of mistakes. .... I feel that our children are not ready to cope - mentally they are, but not with the language. That keeps them back." (Class teacher H)
13. "If you can count in Xhosa and you have to learn how to count in English, you're going through so many processes combined, just [in] counting" (Teacher E)
14. "Ek's baie jammer dat ek nie Xhosa kan praat nie." (I'm very sorry I can't speak Xhosa.") (Teacher B)

Taken together, these comments illustrate the LSP staff perception that School X has a major "problem". On the whole, the programme staff locate the problem in the children "who don't understand" the language of teaching. A facet of this deficit approach is the belief that second-language speakers "have no language" (comments 1 and 2), or are retarded in some fundamental way (comments 3 and 4) - that they represent a blank slate on which the new language is to be inscribed. There can be few more pernicious and debilitating approaches to second-language teaching and learning than this. Children's own linguistic, cultural, interpersonal and cognitive resources are largely discounted as valueless. On the other hand, comments 6 and 10 point to some sympathy and understanding for the plight of the Xhosa-speakers on the part of the LSP staff, amounting to a recognition that something needed to be done about it.

This approach to bilingualism and language education implicitly subscribes to a version of the "language-as-problem orientation", or "the idea of language as causing complications and difficulties" (Baker 1993: 248). Following Baker, this orientation views operating in two languages as causing cognitive problems, personality and social problems (e.g. cultural dislocation, low self-esteem), and political problems (where the cause of conflict is connected to linguistic diversity). In Northern hemisphere educational settings, "language as a problem" manifests itself in the following manner:

> This 'language is an obstacle' attitude is summed up in the phrase, 'If only they would speak English, their problems would be solved'. The minority language is thus seen as a handicap to be overcome by the school system. (Baker 1993: 248-9)

At the same time, comments 7 and 8 point to a recognition that it is up to the school and the teachers to do something about it in order to make up the perceived deficit of the Xhosa-speakers. They draw attention to the fact that teaching and learning are impossible when learners do not understand the teacher's instructions.

7.2.2. *Maximal exposure to English as the answer*

The corollary to the notion that `Xhosa is a problem' is the belief in the need for maximum exposure to English - as much as possible from as early as possible. The need for intervention was explained in these terms:

> They're not being exposed sufficiently to English. It's only the teacher's instruction that is in English, and their response to the teacher. The opportunities and the language models are limited. That is why it warrants intervention... Here we are looking at massive language needs... The problem we have come across everywhere is how to enhance the language of the child sitting in front of me in Sub A and in pre-primary also.
> (LSP Co-ordinator)

The idea that English should effectively replace the home language is also implied in comments 5, 9 and 11, above. It is shared not only by the LSP teachers but by the school's Principal, who believes in the earliest possible submersion into English, from the Reception year[68]. Why this should be so is explained in the following statement that has the virtue of being unusually explicit about its beliefs.

> The framework for the development of language is laid after birth... We had to base the new language on the old frameworks ... Children that are good verbally have a chance to develop an English framework structure from the age of four. If they hear only English from the age of four, that child will have two systems. The later you begin with the second system, the more it is shaped by the first one. The problem is that English is heard only at school, not at home; it's not going to be successful.
> (Teacher B)

The statement is worth examining for its psycholinguistic assumptions. It assumes, correctly, that language development begins straight after birth. However, following Chomsky one would insist that each person is born with an internal language acquisition device or innate blueprint that enables him or her to acquire a language; that learners are endowed with universal principles of grammar which are activated by language input (Baker 1993:87-8) - provided that the learner is exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen 1981:9) which is translated into intake (Baker). In other words, the framework for language development is already in place at birth.

Teacher B's belief that "we had to base the new language on the old frameworks" assumes a different framework or structure for each successive language learnt or acquired by an individual. Second-language development does not take place on the basis of first-language development, according to this belief; the two constitute separate,

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[68]Hence the significance of the establishment of a parent-funded pre-primary class in which the only medium is English.

independent systems. Intriguingly, the second language `framework' appears to be available only to those children who are `strong verbally' and who are exposed exclusively to the new language from the age of four, thereby giving the second (language) `framework' the time to develop. If this is not done - i.e. if the learner passes the age of four without having been exposed sufficiently to the `new language', the chances of him or her becoming proficient in a second language are vastly reduced, and may have disappeared altogether. According to this view, the second system would ideally experience no interference from the first. Under optimal conditions, the Xhosa-speaking child would hear only English at school and at home. Implied is the notion that there are cognitive disadvantages attached to growing up bilingual; at best, the two languages could uneasily co-exist in the learner.

The notion of an age limit to the acquisition of a `new' language is a myth. Baker argues that there are no critical ages in language development, and that "a second language can be successfully acquired from birth or in retirement years" (1995:138). He does acknowledge `advantageous periods' in which language acquisition is more likely to occur, due to factors such as external circumstances, time available, teaching resources and motivation (ibid).

The oddity of the four-year age limit aside, Teacher B's views are representative of what Cummins calls the Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism which "conceives of the two languages operating separately without transfer and with a restricted amount of `room' for languages" (cited by Baker 1993:133)[69]. Central to what Baker terms `the balance theory' of bilingualism and the `two language balloons inside the head' is the belief that only one language can be dominant in any person; that "as one language balloon increases, the other decreases" (ibid:132).

While plausible, the theory has been discredited by research which has found that: 1. there are cognitive advantages rather than disadvantages to being bilingual, as evidenced by certain types of bilingual programmes; 2. there is enough space for more than two languages in the brain; and 3. that, contrary to the assumption that the first and second languages are kept apart in two balloons inside the head, "language attributes are not apart in the cognitive system, but transfer readily and are interactive" (Baker 1993:133). Transfer of maths concepts across languages, for example, is readily possible given a certain level of development in the first language (ibid).

Thus the view that "learning should take place in English to facilitate the acquisition of English" (1992:7) contradicts research findings. It remains, however, a widely prevalent

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[69] See 2.2.3. above.

commonsense assumption about second-language learning. From a Whole Language point of view, a better strategy would have been to facilitate learning "in the first language to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of English" (ibid:7). Baker sums up the "drive for English", which is uncannily suited to the approach adopted at School X:

> One resolution of the problem is regarded as the increased teaching of a majority language (e.g. English) at the expense of the home language. Developing bilingualism is an irrelevant or a secondary and less important aim of schooling. Thus submersion and transitional bilingual education aim to develop competent English language skills in minority language children as quickly as possible so they are on par with English first language speakers in the mainstream classroom. (Baker 1993: 248-9)

7.2.3. Listening skills form the basis of all language learning

> I do believe that stimulating our children's language ability and listening skills is the beginning of upgrading all education... If children don't experience the importance of the spoken word as an introduction to reading and writing, they have fairly poor listening and language skills when they enter school. This leads to a lack of discipline, concentration, *you name it.*"
> (LSP Co-ordinator)

The issue of listening skills will only be addressed briefly here[70], with a focus on only two underlying assumptions.

The above view posits a natural sequence of language acquisition, beginning with listening and speaking and leading on to reading and writing. In other words, in a second language, oral language acquisition precedes the development of literacy, a view opposed by Whole Language (Freeman & Freeman 1992:7). LSP Co-ordinator's statement appears to confuse the sequence in which *grammatical structures* are acquired, with how proficiency is acquired in the four modes of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In his discussion of `caretaker speech', Krashen (1981:125) sums up research which shows "that structures are acquired in a relatively predictable order for children acquiring a given language". It does not necessarily follow, however, that these are acquired in a linear sequence beginning with listening and ending with writing. On the basis of classroom observation as well as secondary research, Freeman & Freeman conclude that "both oral and written language can develop together" (135). Crucially, all the senses are considered important in the development of a second language in order to fulfil children's communication potential (135-6).

The other assumption underpinning LSP Co-ordinator's views is the rather extraordinary link posited between listening skills, on the one hand, and a lack of concentration and

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[70]See sections in Chapter 8 on Phonics, and Listening Skills: whole-class teaching, respectively

discipline in the classroom, on the other. It is self-evident that a child who does not understand enough of what the teacher is saying because he does not share a common language with her, will feel excluded from classroom communication. Likely coping mechanisms include retreating quietly into his own world, or causing disruption as a means of attracting attention. As a result, Xhosa-speaking children at School X are frequently disciplined for being "too boisterous" or "naughty" - particularly the boys (although that is a discussion I cannot go into here). What is ignored in LSP Co-ordinator's statement is any sense of the dislocation second-language speakers suffer when they are submerged in what is effectively a foreign medium (a point acknowledged by Teacher A). It also overlooks the fact that Xhosa-speaking children already possess listening and speaking skills - in their home language! Thus what her statement implies is that unless Xhosa-speaking children have been sufficiently exposed to English in the home before entering school, they will be perpetually ill-disciplined and `unruly' in an English-medium classroom environment. It is a case of putting the cart before the horse. Leaving aside other variables, the chances of language-induced frustrations in a *monolingual remedial*[71] environment appear infinitely greater than in an environment that promotes bilingualism.

7.2.4. A second language is best acquired through listening, imitation and pattern drills

This is a subset of the assumption already explored above. A belief in the value of memorising grammatical structures, e.g. the past tense form `decided' (Teacher A) is of course not wrong in itself. After all, memory is integral to any learning - provided it is the memorisation of something that is understood, that enables the learner to focus on function over form, and that hence has meaning for the learner. Rote memorisation of decontextualised pattern drills that emphasise form at the expense of function is unlikely to lead to learning.

The more important point, however, is that in combination, the elements of listening, imitation and pattern drills are strongly reminiscent of Audiolingualism, which is described in greater detail below. It is hard to overlook the behaviourist impulses behind a statement such as, "I don't speak cryptically, only in full sentences. Over time the children realised that words belong in sentences, and they would spontaneously imitate me" (Teacher B). It is a misconception to believe that learners develop second-language proficiency through imitation. A perspective informed by Chomsky and Krashen would point out that the possible combinations of sentences are literally infinite (hence too many to even contemplate imitating); that an `imitationist' view does not account for interlanguage

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[71] Crawford's (1991: 117) characterisation of the Baker - de Kanter recommendations on bilingual education in the USA.

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features unique to a particular individual; and that the human brain has an internal language acquisition device that enables it to acquire the correct grammatical features on condition that comprehensible input results in intake. Interactive approaches to language learning would emphasise the social nature of language development, and aver that language develops through interactive use in specific domains and situations.

7.2.5. The "better than nothing" option vs "the standard variety only "

Within the bigger discussion of the LoLT debacle-dilemma at School X, as described in this minithesis, the issue of language varieties[72] seems a relatively minor one. Yet it came to the fore at several points. LSP tutors were in agreement that while it was not always possible to do so, it was preferable to teach only the standard language variety of English in the classroom.

The LSP staff voiced strong opinions on the matter. The following comments are pertinent here.

1. The class teacher's English isn't up to standard. The English that she speaks is not grammatically correct. The children are exposed to that and they pick it up. The coloured children don't speak correct English either. So you've got this whole environment. It's benefiting them, but it's not correct. (Teacher E)

2. Children get exposed to all this slang. (Teacher F)

3. I find it a very big problem when the class teachers talk to each other in Afrikaans in front of the class. (Teacher E)

4. Not that my English is perfect. (Teacher E)

5. Two years ago I would have stood on my head and flapped my wings, because [the LSP teachers] do make grammatical errors. But then I asked myself what is the priority. Is it perfect help, or some assistance to get these children conversing? (LSP Co-ordinator)

6. I am not so concerned about the Afrikaans teachers teaching the children in English, and making errors along the way. The bright child is going to eradicate those errors from his English in any event. The child with average ability will cope in the end, and the one who is weak will have the errors in any event. (LSP Co-ordinator)

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[72] What is meant by varieties here is standard vs. non-standard spoken forms of the same language. For a useful, incorporative definition of varieties, see Kaschula & Anthonissen 1995: 117. They include language, dialect, sociolect, pidgins and creoles under this rubric. What is meant by varieties here is standard vs. non-standard spoken forms of the same language.

These comments are interesting for a number of reasons which can only be touched on briefly. Despite its evident linguicism or linguistic racism in relation to `coloured' English, comment 1 reveals a pragmatic attitude towards the teacher's less-than-perfect command of English. It could be summed up with the words, "the better-than-nothing option". Ironically, this approach assumes greater powers of discrimination on the part of the learners than was evident from our previous discussion. By implicitly crediting learners with the ability to distinguish between correct and incorrect forms, Teacher E's statement unwittingly makes some concessions in the direction of the innate language acquisition device posited by Chomsky.

Comment 2 implies that for second-language learning to occur, non-standard varieties (`slang') should be discouraged or even proscribed in the classroom - presumably because they would interfere with the acquisition of the standard variety. The comment reveals an intolerance of `coloured' English, and falls in the linguicist category. It also makes no allowance for the essential difference between spoken and written varieties, between oracy and literacy, which are to be found in most societies.

It is not clear to me why Teacher E finds it unacceptable for class teachers to converse with each other in Afrikaans when they can be overheard by the children. One interpretation would say it is rude of teachers to deliberately choose a language not understood by the learners. Another would detect a (mistaken) belief that hearing Afrikaans would `confuse' children already learning through the medium of a second language. Exposure to more than one language is the norm for most children in South Africa. Xhosa-speakers in the Western Cape are no exception.

The same pragmatism already identified marks teachers' own views and those of their Co-ordinator, of their English language proficiency and its effects on children's learning. Comments 4, 5 and 6 all subscribe to the "better-than-nothing option". Comment 6 appears to signal a degree of fatalism about the LSP, and about language learning more generally. It is as if the quality of instruction does not really matter - it is bound be of some help, no matter how many errors are made. And from my own observations it is true that the LSP teachers make a number of grammar errors. But these weigh lightly when balanced against the overall monolingual remedial approach adopted by the programme.

7.2.6. First language first, second language second?

A final assumption deserves to be briefly highlighted. It emerges in the following exchange.

> There is a tendency amongst Afrikaans-speaking parents to put their children in English-medium schools. This is a pity, because first-language medium of instruction

is the most successful. But seeing we have so many languages I'm not overly concerned about it. If there's nothing wrong with the child, and there is parental support, the child should be able to do it... But the plasticity of the young child's brain and ability to learn another language must never be underestimated. If his first language is quite well established, I don't think it's such a crime to expose him to a second language.
(LSP Co-ordinator)

The argument advanced above could be summed up as follows:

- Belief 1: First-language teaching and learning is best.
- Belief 2: Because South Africa is a multilingual country, this principle no longer applies, provided the child is healthy and enjoys parental support.
- Belief 3: Once the first language is well developed, exposure to a second language is acceptable.

Given the actual practice of the LSP at School X, beliefs 1 and 3 are remarkable for their clear endorsement of education for bilingualism: first-language maintenance and development, followed by the addition of a second language with no loss of the first. However, the argument becomes clouded with the second belief, which opens the way for transitional and submersion programmes or remedial monolingual programmes. In effect, it seems to be applying different criteria for Afrikaans-speaking and Xhosa-speaking children. The assumption is that `white' and `black' children are somehow fundamentally different.

These, then, were the key beliefs about second-language development articulated by LSP staff during interviews. We now need to examine the LSP `in action' in order to ascertain to what extent these views were reflected in the curriculum and in classroom practice.

8.1. Language Support: Withdrawal Classes

> Die fokus in Sub B is om die kinders ontvanklik to maak teenoor die taal, om dit
> toeganklik, ervaarbaar, verstaanbaar en 'n kommunikasiemedium to maak.
> ("The Sub B focus is to make children receptive towards the [English] language, to
> make it accessible, experiential, intelligible, and a medium of communication.")
> (Teacher B)

What did the LSP programme offer the children in terms of curriculum? We have already seen the difficulties involved: the need to start from scratch by developing new methods, finding new materials; the absence of a budget for teaching aids; the lack of co-ordination with the class teachers. What did the LSP teachers do in the classroom during 1995?

A useful starting point is Teacher A's *Report on [School X] Language Enrichment, January to November 1995. Sub B Classes.* While limiting itself to a few introductory comments followed by an overview of the Sub B LSP, the report is relevant to the programme as a whole.

The reason is the relatively close degree of liaison and planning between the LSP tutors, both within and to a lesser extent across the grades. Comments from several of the LSP staff confirm that withdrawal classes as well as the whole-class listening skills lessons were similar across all three JP grades (Sub A, Sub B, Std 1). There was a particularly close working relationship between the Sub B and Std 1 LSP teachers, while the Sub A's were more on their own. "We agreed to meet together after lessons each day to discuss, plan and prepare for the following weeks' lessons" (Teacher A 1995b:1). This innocuous-sounding comment testifies not only to a high degree of co-ordination between the LSP teachers, but also assumes certain commonalities with regard to language learning in second language learners across early childhood (i.e. years 3-9).

The point of departure for the Sub B programme was as follows:

> a) The language which we started with was more or less at a Pre-primary level using
> concrete language experiences. All concepts were carefully examined for potential
> vocabulary problems."
> b) The auditory perception skills were pitched at Pre-primary level moving on to Sub
> A requirements as the children improved.
> (ibid:1).

These statements appear to be sensitive to the language needs of new learners (of English) by lowering expectations of performance. However, they are also problematic because they assume a fixed or pre-given standard of first-language development against

which second-language learners are to be measured. Thus English L1 speaking children in Model C schools become the yardstick against which Xhosa L1 speakers are measured in terms of their English language proficiency. The question of whether it is useful to regard L2 learners as being two years behind their L1 peers is left unanswered. In its deficit approach to second-language learning, the LSP falls inside the academic support paradigm described in Chapter 4.

The report negatively assesses the lack of co-ordination with the Itinerant Remedial Teachers from the School Clinic/Support Centre, and with the school's own full-time Remedial Teacher.

The approach to curriculum in the withdrawal classes, termed small group language lessons, is summarised as follows:

> As the lessons were short, emphasis was placed on auditory and verbal [sic] skills. No written skills were called upon at any time. We found that to send [i.e. give] homework was difficult to monitor due to time constraints. All material presented had to be fun and exciting to help the children relax and respond positively.
> (Teacher A 1995b: 3)

Time pressure is the justification given for separating out written from oral (mistakenly termed "verbal", above) language. Admittedly, 20 minutes per week is not a lot of time in which to do writing, especially in the L2 at Sub B level. Yet there is more to this `realistic' approach (to delaying writing) than merely the time constraint. It rests on the commonsense assumption that "[i]n a second language, oral language acquisition precedes the development of literacy" (Freeman & Freeman 1992: 7). This contradicts a central Whole Language principle.

> Especially for students learning English as a second language, the traditional view has been that the development of oral language must precede the development of literacy. However, involvement in reading and writing from the start is essential for developing academic competence. Both written and oral language can be developed simultaneously.
> (ibid:8)

The programme for the withdrawal classes for the Sub B's had the following shape: In the first term, the main emphasis was on language acquisition "through concrete experience". Thematically, lessons began with the child (introductions, greetings, body parts).

> We felt that this would ease the children into the school system. This was included as the theme for the listening skills lessons. The aim was to strengthen the language taught in two different settings for the children in the small language groups. Body parts naming nouns and couching them in simple sentences in the singular as well as the plural form were introduced ... No spontaneous sentences were required from

the children as we felt that they were still in the *receptive mode*. The only expectations were in *copying model sentences* either spoken or read off sentence strips. This `imitation' period seemed to ease them into hearing the sound of their own voices within the group setting. (Teacher A 1995b: 3; original emphasis)

A number of assumptions about second-language learning are embedded in the extract above. First, second-language learners have to be "eased into the system" as smoothly as possible so as to create the minimum disruptions for the class teacher. This amounts to a teacher-centred approach that has more to do with classroom control than with language learning. This is not to deny the need for such control, especially in large classes of 45+ children. It is also not to question that children need to learn some of the rules and be able to cope in the LoLT. It is merely to question whether an introduction to something as exciting and full of possibility as learning a second language should be subjected to the classroom-control imperative as a first principle, especially in small groups where discipline ceases to be such a problem. A second assumption is that in second-language learning, an initial focus on receptive language precludes spontaneous utterances, and that an `imitation period' is necessary. This assumption appears to be sensitive to learners' shyness and obvious beginner-status in the L2. However, it also implies that L2 learners are empty vessels ready to be filled with ESL content. Pre-packaged second-language exercises provided by the teacher render children passive and ignore their own experiences, lived realities, contexts, knowledge - quite apart from their own language. This is precisely the type of behaviourism that the Chomskyan revolution swept away, at least in theory. Such deeper concerns aside, however, such an approach runs the risk of simply boring children[73].

8.1.1. Stories

In *The Need for Story*, Dyson & Genishi (1994) point to the centrality of story in children's lives and in their relationships. As verbalised acts of the imagination, stories enable children to become "narrated selves, who can tell the stories of their own lives, and narrating selves, who share interpretations with others" (1994:2). Stories encode our cultural membership, of belonging in the world. As such they are immensely empowering, although they can also act as constraints if children, in an attempt to impress listeners, lock into gender role stereotypes (ibid:4). In short, "[t]he storytelling self is a social self, who declares and shapes important relationships through the mediating power of words" (ibid:5). Implications for the classroom are the forging of new relationships, new classroom cultures, and new collective identities (ibid). In seeking to explain the need for story, the authors affirm that stories enable us to transform the present through language,

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[73] See Appendix 2 for field notes of a practical example of a withdrawal lesson whose inappropriate content and teacher-centred approach resulted in an apparent failure to engage the children.

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and that they give us hope to realise the transformed future that is envisioned (Genishi & Dyson 1994:243).

The second term at School X saw the LSP team experimenting with stories, something which found an immediate resonance with children in the withdrawal classes. "Stories captivate the children, who are sometimes prepared to miss out on break-time to hear the end of a story" (Teacher A). Another teacher highlighted the centrality of stories in making meaning:

> Before we started off with stories it was very difficult to get them to say a little sentence about the shape, such as "this is a circle". But where you had a story and it was ongoing we got to the stage where they were telling the story - even if it was just a repetition of a sentence - but it was something that meant more to them. In the end you could ask them to reason about the story, e.g. "Why do you think she cried?" Now it made sense to them. Things like circles are too abstract. They enjoyed the stories more than anything else... because something was going to happen.
> (Teacher E)

This recognition of the power of stories represented a significant breakthrough in the development of the LSP curriculum. From then on, most classroom activities revolved around story. The route the LSP teachers took was the following:

> a) To choose traditional folk tales/nursery stories which had a repetitive language theme.
> b) To try to encourage verbal [sic] expressive language in a controlled way. (the children still seemed to be in the receptive language stage.) Sentences strips were made use of with some success as some children could read reasonably well but had not developed confidence with speaking English.
> c) to simplify the language and adapt it to suit the children's needs.
> d) A practical problem of finding suitable books might be met by collectively searching for them ahead of time. Some simple illustrations at this early stage are vital to highlight specific vocabulary which you are introducing.
> e) Preparation was most time-consuming as each teacher had to familiarise herself with the elements in the story being prepared at that time.
> f) As we prepared the stories we noticed that they were rich in specific grammatical structures which we exploited, e.g. prepositions, personal pronouns and degrees of comparison etc. (*particularly difficult for these Xhosa speakers is the gender differences in personal pronouns*)
> (Teacher A 1995b: 4; original emphasis)

Teacher A used a "lesson trilogy" to teach stories: in the first lesson she told the story with the help of visual props; then followed a dramatisation by the children; and finally relevant grammatical structures were highlighted in an activity. Like the other staff, Teacher A borrowed or adapted material from other schools where she works. As they had almost no African stories to draw on, the teachers started with western nursery stories, and animal stories such as `Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Key elements to making the story

accessible included simplifying the register, shortening the story, and adapting the visual representation. Teachers looked for stories with black characters "so that children will identify with them" (Teacher B). An example was `Sipho Starts His Day', from *The Family Magazine* (see Appendix 3). Teachers acknowledged it was difficult to find appropriate stories that lent themselves to dramatisation by the children. They would look for stories with repeated sentences (e.g. "Run, run as fast as you can" from `The Gingerbread Man'), using rhythm as a mnemonic device (Teacher B).

This approach to stories can be termed instrumental: stories become, at least partially, a means to the end of teaching standard English grammar. In the light of the description of the need for story (above), the practice of using stories to teach vocabulary, syntax, prepositions, pronouns, degrees of comparison and even pronunciation (see discussion of Phonics, below) appears impoverished indeed. Strategies such as the following illustrate the method used to teach grammar:

> In the beginning we did one sentence at a time. You couldn't tell the whole story because they wouldn't have remembered. The next time we repeated that sentence and went on a little bit. So it's also what to expect next. You could say that their language developed, they wanted to know more, because their memory improved they could remember more.
> (Teacher E)

In its slow piecing-together of the story ("one sentence at a time"), and in the belief that memory is built up through the selective input of discreet "bite-sized" (Teacher A) bits of information, the approach described above is a classic example of the commonsense assumption that learning proceeds from part to whole (Freeman & Freeman 1992:7). This approach diametrically opposes the Whole Language principle that learning proceeds from whole to part (ibid), a principle that must apply particularly to stories.

In some instances even indifferent facilitation by the teacher could not get in the way of the power of story. In a Std 1 group lesson on `The Three Little Pigs' the teacher had written the story on a poster which was stuck up on the wall. Children had to repeat the story after her in words and phrases. The lesson was disappointing for the inconsistency in the teacher's use of vocabulary (the crucial preposition that follows "and blew the house..." became *in* and *down*, interchangeably, with no consideration for the difference in phonics, ironically), the occasional concord error in her speech, confusion in the allocation of roles for the enactment of the story, resulting in no-one being the wolf, the teacher's non-involvement in the role-play, and a patronising tone. Despite these hiccups the children's concentration was unwavering, although they may have been slightly cowed by having to perform a dance of celebration at the wolf's demise for their visitors. In her comments afterwards, Teacher C said that she adopted a holistic approach to the

curriculum at School X. "When doing a story everything has to do with the theme of the story, with only occasional digressions into sentence structure."

Despite these and other uses to which stories were put in practice, children appeared to enjoy stories, and had fun identifying with characters such as `Sipho' who starts his day in much the way the children probably do. Summing up her impressions after a visit to School X in June 1995, Carole Bloch (1995) writes,

> All teachers told how well the children responded to the story method, which they have been trying recently. Before this, they spent a lot of time drilling the children in vocabulary and sounds. Moved on to stories to try to engage children more. The stories are very broken up and lose their "flow" and magic when they become an exercise. Yet the children still were engaged to a point, which shows how powerful stories actually are.

8.1.2. `Language alongside a concrete experience'

A second method used in withdrawal classes was what Teacher A terms "language alongside a concrete experience", a form of (English) language learning that accompanied the performance of a physical activity by the group involving authentic props. The activity would be related to an overarching theme, e.g. Spring. A unit would consist of two lessons. In the first, the teacher would introduce core vocabulary and sentences in relation to the tasks at hand ("sentences in context") - for example, potting violas (not the musical instrument!). "The children performed the necessary actions alongside the core vocabulary set in simple sentences" (Teacher A 1995b: 4). In the second lesson, i.e. the following week, the teacher would "recap" on what was done in the previous lesson and require of children to respond verbally to a keyword (noun plus illustration) she presented. The method worked well for her:

> I was duly impressed with the quality of their responses. Even the weaker respondents were attempting to answer. This type of approach also had an impact on their ability to remember detail. It seemed to fire them with confidence in using English.
> (1995b: 5)

This approach was at times linked to a particular story. For example, in the English and Afrikaans Sub A withdrawal classes the teachers used the story of `Goldilocks and the Three Bears' as the context for making porridge in the classroom. In the Afrikaans class a group of four children, three boys and a girl, listened silently as the teacher recapped on the story (taught the previous week). When asked to retell the story, however, the children had to be prompted for literally every word (*pap, bakkie, sout, suiker, soet, proe* - porridge, bowl, salt(y), sugar, sweet, taste). The self-consciousness of the children in dutifully mouthing every word was probably due in part to the presence of three adult

visitors in the classroom. What should have been a fun, interactive and participative activity for the children became strained and tedious - and of limited value in terms of language learning. The teacher (D), probably unconsciously, may have perpetuated a gender bias by asking the only girl in the class to stir the *pap* in the *papbakkie* for the class to *proe*.

This participative approach was also used without props. The following extract from a Sub B group shows how it worked in practice.

> T: I'm going to act out something and I want you to tell me what I'm doing. *T stands in front of class, closes her eyes, slants her head sideways and puts her hands under it as an imaginary pillow. She remains silent throughout the next few gestures.*
> C: [Teacher A] is sleeping. *T fakes a yawn.*
> C: [Teacher A] is yawning.... *T ties her shoelaces.*
> C: [Teacher A] is tying she's shoes.
> T: Is it she's or her shoes?
> C: [Teacher A] is tying her shoes.
> C: Shoelaces.
> T: Very good. Give him a clap. *Everyone dutifully applauds. T pretends to wash her face, bending over a basin.*
> C: [Teacher A] washing her face.
> T: Isn't there something missing?
> C: Is.
> T: IS washing....
> *T holds up an imaginary slice of bread.*
> C: [Teacher A] take one slice of bread.
> T: Don't say [Teacher A], say `you'. *T puts two slices together.*
> T: You put the two pieces together.
> C: [Teacher A] she is eating the bread.
> T: Say "you".
> T (*to me*): Notice the change of pronoun, and their use of plurals. It's a maturational thing.
> ...
> *T pretends to be brushing her teeth.*
> C: You brushing your teeth.
> *T pretends to rinse her mouth. Children remain silent.*
> T: What am I doing? R-r-r-i -i-n-n-se.
> C: Rinse [pronounced /rins/, or `reense' to English L1 ears].
> T: Rinse.... What did you have for breakfast this morning?
> C: I eat a porridge.
> T: I ATE porridge. Say it?
> C: I ate a porridge. [pronounced /it/, or `eat']
> C: I ate wheatbix. [ditto]
> T: I ATE wheatbix.
> C: I ate ricecrispies. [ditto]
> C: I ate rice. [ditto]. *Children laugh.*
> T (*gently chiding*): Why are you laughing? You ate rice, she ate ricecrispies. They are also made of rice!

This example, while less concrete for employing invisible props, can nevertheless usefully be termed "language as a concrete activity" as it involves "language in action". For once, the roles are reversed - the children do the talking, the teacher does the acting. Later in the same lesson (not extracted above) children clearly start enjoying the momentary `transfer of power' as the teacher lets them manipulate her through instructions. It is to the teacher's credit for experimenting with such methods, which certainly keep children fascinated because of the contrast to their regular (large) classes in which the teacher never gives up her control, not even in appearance.

And yet it is only an apparent role reversal. For in reality the Teacher A is in total control of proceedings. She initiates the activity, and decides on each successive gesture to which the children have to respond. She corrects grammar and pronunciation. This approach has the virtue of being consistent with its professed aim of not requiring spontaneous sentences (Teacher A 1995b:3). Children do not get the chance to initiate anything. They become passive receptacles for the teacher's input. They are presumed not to be proficient enough in English to volunteer any information of their own. The approach comes close to being patronising. The first assumption, then, is that in a second-language situation, the teacher has to be in total control and elicit carefully-controlled and systematic oral production. Otherwise discipline problems might arise?

A second feature is the number of times the teacher corrects errors made by a child. In the space of five minutes she corrects a pronoun error (`her' for `she's'), prompts for an auxiliary verb (`is washing'), initiates a switch from the third person (`she') to the second person singular (`you') pronoun, corrects tense usage (`ate' for `eat'), and corrects the pronunciation of a lexical item (`rinse'). She also has time to pass a remark to me that draws further attention to a syntactic feature (the change of pronoun). The assumption underlying this concern with error correction is that children learn the wrong form if the error remains uncorrected. This stands in contradiction to language processing theory which makes strong claims for the remarkable ability of the human brain, particularly the young child's brain, to tease out the correct grammatical forms from the proliferation of standard and non-standard language varieties that surround the child.

While this is not the place for an error analysis, what should be stressed is that the errors made by the second-language learners, above, are almost certainly also routinely made by first-language learners of English, albeit at an earlier stage. If one accepts that second-language proficiency develops on the basis of first-language development, it follows that, given sufficient exposure to the target language, the learner will pick up the correct form sooner or later (similar to the first-language situation). And as we have seen, the submersion of Xhosa-speakers into the English-medium stream means they receive more

than enough exposure to the standard variety. And if some of the teachers' reports are correct, a number of parents speak English to their children at home. What seems clear, then, is that the insistence on the correct form in early oral production in the second language is, at best, unnecessary. At worst, learners shy away from taking risks in their new language out of fear of being made to look foolish. A concern with explicitly correcting every error in a small-group second-language learning situation is bound to demotivate learners from pushing up the ceiling of their language proficiency in the target language. The effect is profoundly disempowering. In its behaviourist trappings, Teacher A's lesson neatly illustrates the commonsense assumption that (second-language) learning takes place as individuals practice skills and form habits (Freeman & Freeman 1992:7).

Finally, the interaction extracted above highlights Teacher A's concern with pronunciation. This occurs twice: the first time with `rinse' (pronounced /rins/ {reense} by the child), the second time with `ate' (pronounced /it/ {eat} by all the children - although this instance is open to interpretation. Was it a case of a different accent (pronunciation) or of the wrong tense (syntax)?. The first instance, however, leaves little doubt as to the teacher's bias towards native-speaker-like pronunciation, or Received Pronunciation (RP), and her antipathy towards indigenous `African' accents. The implication is that second-language speakers should be discouraged from `owning' the English language and developing their own accents. Instead (so the reasoning goes), they should be guided towards imitating the accents of first-language speakers. Unfortunately, this purist approach amounts to a version of *linguicism* or linguistic racism, or what one could call *accentism* - for it is not the language itself, but its pronunciation that is being stigmatised (and with it the users of such an accent). A concern with RP (except where it affects understanding) runs the risk of being labelled racist or colonial unless it is counteracted by language practices that do not attempt to turn `African' children into "black Englishmen" (cf. Alexander 1989: 18)!

8.1.3. Phonics: theory & practice

According to Carter (1995:117), phonics "is a term used to describe approaches to initial or remedial teaching of reading which are based on learners being taught to recognise sound-letter combinations." He provides a useful description of the use to which phonics has traditionally been put.

> Phonic approaches rely on `sounding out' words. Thus the word `cat' is taught as the relationship between the letters c-a-t and the sounds which the letters represent. Such an approach is also said to provide learners with a systematic strategy for decoding words and to provide a secure basis for working out the pronunciation of new words.

This approach assumes a seamless continuity between spoken and written language, or a 100% phonetic regularity. This is not the case for English, however, as approximately 30% of words in the English language are phonetically irregular (Carter 1995: 118).

> For example, the word `row' (as a verb) has similar vowel sounds to the words `so', `toe', `although' and is in turn phonetically dissimilar from the noun `row' (argument), which has the same spelling.
> (ibid)

In similar vein, Wallace concludes that a phonics approach to English script is hard to defend since

> English is not wholly `phonetic' and many of the most frequent items - the structure words such as *were, the* and *here* - are not phonically decodable. Learners encouraged to think that English is phonetic, quickly become confused and frustrated. (1988:90)

Thus phonics is "a hit-and-miss affair for learner-readers" (Wallace 1988:90), who are also not helped if the word or reference is not known to them. Pertinently,

> the teaching of phonics is often based on sound distinctions made in Received Pronunciation (RP), and a serious objection to phonic approaches or material - for non-native or non-standard speakers of English - is that their own pronunciation may at times diverge quite markedly from RP.... This is even more true of vowel sounds, which are less distinctive, both visually and phonetically, than the consonants. (ibid)

Arguably even in the case of a phonetic language such as Afrikaans, with its near-total phoneme-grapheme correspondence, it seems doubtful whether spelling should be taught on the basis of oral language. After all, "the spoken language is radically different in form and structure from the written language" (Carter 1995:113). The debate about standard and non-standard varieties is pertinent here. The most telling indictment of phonics approaches comes from Wallace.

> However, more important than any of these is the fact that it is difficult for all learner readers to understand what is meant by sounds, either conceptually or functionally... Referring to letters as sounds creates some conceptual confusion. Nor is it easy to give sounds any functional reality; we do not in everyday life go around giving the sounds of letters. It is hard, therefore, in a general way for learner-readers to see what sounds mean, to understand what they are and what they do. (ibid:90)

For Freeman & Freeman, "[p]honic approaches presuppose mainly teacher-centred procedures and can involve a whole class learning at the same time" (1992:118). Teacher-centred lessons are ones in which learning is viewed as the transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the student - one of the commonsense assumptions about bilingual learning (7). By definition, therefore, a heavy emphasis on phonics appears to be

antithetical to the Whole Language principle that "lessons should be learner-centred because learning is the active construction of knowledge by the student" (ibid).

To what extent did the LSP make use of phonics approaches? The following extracts from an observation report of a Sub B pull-out group lesson and the subsequent interview with Teacher A, respectively, illustrate her approach to oral language. First the lesson extract, based on my field notes.

The next activity consists of questions and answers around the theme of getting up in the morning.
Teacher A (*henceforth T; pointing to a simple visual representation of a boy with black curly hair -plausibly `African' - who gets up in the morning and prepares to go to school*): Who is this?
Child (*henceforth C*):   Sipho.
T: What is Sipho doing?
C1:   Sipho wakes up at seven 'o clock.
T: Good. And then?
C2:   Sipho puts on his school shirt.
C3:   Sipho wash his self.
T: Sipho washes HIMself.
C4:   Sipho has breakfas'.
T: Listen - breakfasT (*T quietly takes C4's wrist, puts her mouth within breathing distance of the back of his hand and articulates a deliberately aspirated `t'*).
   Meanwhile the children are putting up their posters one at a time. Each contains one of the following sentences:
   Cut the slice in half.
   Clean the knives with Carlton paper towels.
   Wipe the table clean with a cloth.
   Throw the rubbish away.
   Enjoy your sandwich.
Children take turns in reading the story aloud. When everyone has had a turn, T says,
T: What shall we call the story?
C1:   Lunch.
C2:   Food.
T: What did we make? Did we make a sandwich?
C: Yes.
C1:   The sandwiches.
T: All right, let's call it The Sandwiches. (T points to the letter -c- in *sandwiches*) This is a soft `k'. It's curly, like my hair. (As the children crowd round T at the table where she is writing the title of the story, one or two touch her hair admiringly.)

Children visibly enjoyed this part of the lesson. They appeared to respond well to Teacher A's warmth and encouragement, her non-judgmental manner when dealing with errors, the dramatisation of the story using imaginary props, and especially the intimacy of touching the teacher's hair. This friendly atmosphere of relaxed trust was clearly conducive to active participation by the children, and amounted to an important affective motivating factor in the learning of the second language.

Two moments in the above exchange highlight aspects of the phonics approach adopted. The first occurs when Teacher A gently berates C4 (the fourth child to have spoken) for not having pronounced the word *breakfast* properly. Specifically, she is objecting to the elision of the final consonant -t-. She holds the child's wrist and aspirates the dropped letter (-t-) against the back of the child's hand. This is clearly a technique deriving from her Speech & Hearing training and has the virtue of providing immediate feedback and being quite `physical' and thereby memorable to the child. It has the obvious drawback of being limited to a small-group class; clearly it would not work in a class of 40+ children.

The incident underlines a central assumption in the phonics approach, namely that the `sounding out' of words according to individual letters is important for promoting pronunciation. Thus pronouncing the final -t- in *breakfast* would assist the learner in decoding and spelling, which in itself assumes that we write as we speak. We shall return to this point below. It is no accident (see Wallace, above) that the particular variety of pronunciation promoted by the teacher is RP, the standard South African English variety. Local pronunciation in everyday speech by non-native speakers of English, for example Afrikaans or Xhosa speakers in the Western Cape, would frequently drop the final consonant of a word if it comes after another consonant (e.g. tes' for test, des' for desk, expec' for expect, and so on). Since the dropping of the final -t- in *breakfast* does not affect the meaning in the slightest, the insistence on its (Received) pronunciation is not only pedantic but arguably *linguicist*, an example of linguistic racism.

The second incident, that of the `soft *k*' or `curly c' in the extract above testifies to the teacher's skills of improvisation. However, this extraordinary act presumes a great deal on the part of children, and is based on a set of beliefs consonant with a phonics approach. It presumes that children know the word `soft' and can identify the sound of a `soft *k*'; that they understand the connection between aural sounds and written representations; that they can infer that the -c-'s position immediately in front of the letter -h- makes of the otherwise `hard *k*' (as in c-a-t, for example) a `soft *k*' which is represented visually by the combination of -ch-, of which the first part is visually equivalent to a curly lock of the teacher's hair; and that an understanding of all this is necessary in order to learn to spell the word *sandwich*. Fundamentally, Teacher A's approach assumes the recognition of sound-letter combinations to be a useful way of learning spelling, and by implication, of becoming literate. Given the amount of processing required, it would be nothing short of miraculous for any language learner to benefit in the intended manner from such an approach. The particular example in question must therefore surely undermine any notion of the usefulness of the phonics approach.

The following extract from the subsequent interview with Teacher A throws some light on the episode.

Interviewer: How much time have you spent on pronunciation and phonics?

Teacher A: There's this tendency to leave off the -s in plurals, and -t's and -d's. We will highlight that, either if the child repeats it incorrectly repeatedly, we'll work through listening so that it's feedback so you'll say the sound if they can't hear it - there might be hearing loss - so we would revert to techniques used for hard-of-hearing children. Just simply pick up the hand, say the word so they'll feel the -s or -d at the end of the word. Then you carry on teaching so that it's quick. You get them, "Look at me, watch my mouth, say the word." It's an immediate feedback with the mistake that's being made. But I feel strongly - and I know this is the big thing with English and any other accent or language - that if you work on the vowels, you win them. If they can't pronounce their vowels the intonation is often incorrect and wrong.

Did you hear how they pronounced the word `sandwich' today? The [æ] {a}. It was /sʌndwi--/ {sundwi--} and then you saw how I tried to highlight the spelling of the curly [k]. The last group picked it up and took it as a diagraph - the /c/, which it actually is. These two letters -ch- come up in Sub A, and it's reiterated in Sub B - now they were able to give me that sound as a whole, whereas when the others were spelling they were doing single sounds. They didn't have an explanation of how you say the sound. They were trying to say /s/, and it's not an /s/. And then to teach them how to spell the curly /k/, I had to improvise with my hair. But with this /æ/ {-a-, as in sand} that was /ʌ/ {-u-, as in much}. That is essentially a very big weakness, and a very bad one that will need work. That we can bring up in our listening skills. I will alert the others, and we can act on that.

Interviewer: Isn't it a question of accent? Even our President would quite possibly pronounce it as /sʌndwlc/ {sundwich}!

Teacher A: It would only be a means to the end of teaching correct spelling. For if they write the word `sandwich' in Sub B then they are going to spell it as they say it. So it will be a /ʌ/ {-u-}; and elephant will be ulephant, and that will be marked wrong in a spelling test. You have got to give them tools, and there are ways to teach them. There's a simple story I developed about the dance, about the story. If they learn that it's a key to helping them to identify... I should teach it to the teachers, I've done it in the Model C schools. They use those teaching techniques, that story, and the elements I've mentioned to say it's that sound, it's not this one. Even mother tongue English speaking kids have problems with /ɛ/ and /I/ and /æ/ and /ʌ/ and /a/, and /U/ as well. It's what we call fine listening and focusing, which in educational terms is working on phonics. If the phonics is strong they will be able to sound out and spell [.........].

Interviewer: I suppose the principle would also work if you were an African-language speaker, if English was your second language and you taught the word as /sʌndwlc/ {sundwich}. If you taught the phonic /æ/ {-a-} as /ʌ/ {-u-}, children would learn that that - /æ/ is pronounced /ʌ/ and would in fact spell it correctly.

Teacher A: But the problem is: what do you do if you have `sunshine'?

Interviewer: I take your point. You're assuming there's a connection between the sound of the letter in isolation, and the sound of the letter inside a word, and the

spelling in the word. But is that necessarily the case? Sometimes an -a- will change, depending on where it's located, for example **An** apple, but **A** book. The [-a-] is spellt the same but audially it's different.

Teacher A: And that's why English is a funny language, a terribly difficult language. That's the problem or fight teachers have in presenting this myriad of spelling rules to the children, but in bite-sized pieces.

At least two assumptions about the phonics approach emerge in the discussion of the pronunciation of *sandwich*. The first, already alluded to above, is the teacher's intolerance towards non-standard spoken varieties. Her RP-inspired disapproval of an `African' pronunciation (i.e. *sundwich*), such as the one uttered by her pupils and putatively by President Mandela himself, implies that all `African' learners of English should aspire to the unspoken norm of a `white' South African standard variety. The teacher justifies what amounts to a linguicist attitude by pointing to the need for a standard pronunciation, which

would only be a means to the end of teaching correct spelling. For if they write the word sandwich in Sub B then they are going to spell it as they say it.

In the sandwich/sunshine discussion above, the teacher is questioning the wisdom of allowing children to pronounce the word *sandwich* as *sundwich*. Her concern is that it would confuse children in their spelling. Since the initial vowel in *sandwich* would, if `uncorrected' (i.e. if pronounced as *sundwich*), sound like the initial vowel in *sunshine*, children would spell the word incorrectly as *sundwich*.

We have already seen the pitfalls of adopting this approach in teaching a language such as English which is not 100% phonetic. Teacher A acknowledges that even first-language children have difficulty with distinguishing the vowel sounds from one another, and inferring spelling. But she does not arrive at the more pragmatic approach to phonics adopted by a class teacher, who concentrates on pronunciation "only where it affects understanding" (Teacher H:1995) in *oral* communication.

At best this type of phonics momentarily detracts from the more interactive and exciting aspects of the withdrawal classes. At worst it could stunt children's desire and ability to learn the most powerful language in the world today. More broadly, phonics approaches with their behaviourist emphasis on practising sound-letter drills correspond to a commonsense assumption about bilingual learning identified by Freeman & Freeman: "Learning takes place as individuals practice skills and form habits" (1992:7). It is a real question as to how much learning behaviourist approaches do permit.

8.1.4. Codeswitching: use of Xhosa in the classroom

One of the more encouraging dynamics of the withdrawal classes was the LSP teachers' tolerance of codeswitching into and from Xhosa. Code-switching is defined as "switching from one language variety to another when the situation demands" (Trudgill 1983:75), in other words, "a change by a speaker or writer from one language or language variety to another one" (Kaschula & Anthonissen 1995:113). However, while this manner of utilising learners' existing linguistic resources appeared to promote the self-esteem of those children able to do so, it should be borne in mind that codeswitching was used here as "a personal compensatory strategy" in order "to fill in the **teachers' gaps**" (Gough 1994:11, original emphasis).

Code-switching was a feature of the withdrawal groups, particularly at the start of the year when the communication gap between teacher and children was greatest. In one English-medium Sub A class there was much codeswitching initially, less later on (Teacher F). In another, the teacher made a virtue of necessity by using those children more proficient ("strong") in English to relay instructions in Xhosa to those less proficient ("weaker") (Teacher E). For some children, "it's the only way". In her `top' group the children would help each other by using English, while in her `bottom' group children would switch to Xhosa (Teacher E). A third Sub A teacher (G) struck a positive note when she reported "how the little faces had lit up" when she had used a Xhosa greeting. When asked about the respective class teachers, the LSP staff reported that one class teacher allowed informal codeswitching into Xhosa, while the other did not. LSP staff emphasised the affective-motivational value of codeswitching into Xhosa. "It is a way of establishing a bond with the children initially" (LSP Coordinator). Similar views were expressed by Teacher A who felt that the odd greeting or phrase in Xhosa would serve "to win them over" and make children feel accepted. However, she stressed that the role of the mother tongue should be limited to initial learning, and that learners should move out of the comfort zone of their own language as soon as possible.

One teacher (English-medium Sub B LSP) went further than the others when she expressed regret at her inability to use Xhosa.

> I am very sorry I can't speak Xhosa. Especially at the beginning of the year. This little boy tried to express himself about two people in the class, and he couldn't do it in English. I made use of the situation by saying, "OK, he can continue (in Xhosa), but someone has to tell me what he said." Then the group help each other. One would say it meant one thing, another would say, "You would say it differently in English". In this way an interpreting process takes place, and buddies help each other to express their (Xhosa) thoughts in English. It still happens at this stage of the year. They become increasingly free to chat with me, or to tell me that the story reminds them of something that happened to them. They want to tell me, "I also have

a rucksack such as this", or "In the mornings I don't first put on my clothes, but I first wash my face". Usually they try in English, and when they grind to a halt they continue in Xhosa. But their buddies help. The stronger ones always help the weaker ones. I have one very weak girl, she hardly speaks a word and has lots of other problems. When I ask her a question in English, she won't understand. She doesn't listen to me. But if they ask her the same question in Xhosa, she answers me in English. She would never answer a question put to her in English.
(Teacher B)

The extract encapsulates much of the good use to which codeswitching can be put in the withdrawal group situation. It throws interesting light on the negotiation of meaning inherent in the interpreting process, and the potentially empowering effects on the children. For it is their knowledge, their language skills and intuitions that are needed at such moments. And the result is greater participation in the meaning-making process by everybody. It is to the teacher's credit that she has made a virtue of necessity in this manner. In and of itself, however, it is clear that longer-term solutions to the language challenge lie elsewhere.

The problem to be solved by the education system in relation to languages of learning and teaching is neatly captured in the following comment by Teacher E.

I feel it's unfair to expect a child... to learn English, that will never be his first language. [Xhosa] will help the children to cope better, because it's their language... If you can count in Xhosa and you have to learn how to count in English, you're going through so many processes combined, just counting... They are learning how to read but they don't have the vocabulary, they don't understand what they are reading. The top children will be able to do it, but of course the bottom children won't be. They've got too many barriers to climb over to get to that stage. It's very difficult.

The statement is perceptive for pointing to the "double load" carried by Xhosa-speakers at School X, and indeed by all learners in submersion or subtractive bilingual programmes. In a discipline such as maths they not only have to learn arithmetic, but also enough English to understand and respond to the task at hand (see De Klerk 1996:3). The cognitive demands of having to learn concept (e.g. multiplication) and medium (English) simultaneously are likely to be too great for all but the talented few. And in reading, understanding may lag far behind the mouthing of words (echolalia).

8.2. Listening skills: whole-class teaching

Alongside the withdrawal classes, listening skills taught to the whole class formed the second prong of the LSP at School X.

The purpose of introducing listening skills to the whole class was for the following reasons:

a) Auditory perception skills; auditory discrimination, auditory sequential memory, auditory analysis as well as auditory synthesis and phonological awareness.
b) Receptive Language in context; introduction of vocabulary in a meaningful setting, concept building to aid learning in the classroom situation, and grammatical structures in a logical sequence.
c) Expressive language tasks would follow, once the children showed more confidence with the above areas. This was judged by their speed and confidence in responding to receptive language tasks such as following instructions using gross motor responses.
d) No formal screening tests were performed to establish the general ability of the children's receptive and expressive language. *Early on in the first term we soon felt at a loss to identify where the children were in their language acquisition. A form of continuing evaluation evolved. This took the form of 'diagnostic teaching', i.e. teaching a lesson and using it as guide for future preparation as some areas needed repetition in the concrete form to develop the concept being taught, e.g. prepositions: A game was played with the children where they put their hands, under, behind or in front of their bodies.*
(Teacher A 1995b: 6; original emphases).

Much of the above description is reminiscent of the *audiolingual method* of teaching a second language, which Freeman & Freeman (1992:43) call an empiricist method. Empiricism arose out of the confluence of structural linguistics and behavioural psychology as theorised in North America and Europe in the middle of the century. It gave rise to contrastive analysis, or the study of how a learner's first language differed from their second. Influenced by contrastive analysis and the principles of interference (of the first language) and habit formation (Hakuta & Cancino 1991:76), the audiolingual method of second-language learning "stresses oral language, memorization of dialogues, and pattern drills and de-emphasises grammar" (Freeman & Freeman 1992:43). Audiolingualism is premised on the belief that each language is a distinct set of speech habits. Learners need to be taught a particular set of patterns in the second language in order to ground themselves in it. Once these are repeated often enough to be established, learners will be able to produce their own sentences (Crawford 1991:99). The stimuli-response sequences take the form of structure-based dialogues which have as their end goal native speaker-like pronunciation (Baker 1993:216). In the audiolingual method listening and speaking are emphasised at the expense of reading and writing, with a focus on correct language. The aim is for the learner

> to avoid making linguistic mistakes in sentence construction and gain an automatic, accurate control of basic sentence structures. (ibid:216-7)

In the process, learners are denied input into curriculum-making and everyday classroom activity because they are assumed to not speak the target language; "they have no input in what they learn or how they learn it" (Freeman & Freeman 1992:43). The authors note that while audiolingualism has since been discredited by the Chomskian revolution, it continues to flourish in second-language programmes all over the world.

The LSP formulation above is heavily indebted to audiolingual methods in the following respects:

- its focus on listening skills and phonics
- its sequencing of second-language learning, beginning with listening (or receptive skills) before moving on to speaking (expressive or productive language), and delaying reading and writing
- the targeting of syntactical and lexical items for special pattern drills and "memorization and mimicry" (Baker 1993:216), e.g. prepositions
- the part-to-whole approach implied by the above
- the assumption that lessons are teacher centred
- the unquestioned assumption that all learning should take place in the target language (English)
- the assumption that learners bring nothing of value to the class because they "have no language" (a comment made by several of the LSP teachers at one point or other).

By this stage it ought to be clear that every one of the above assumptions is in conflict with Whole Language principles.

What did a listening skills lesson at School X entail in practice? One particular lesson taught by Teacher A to a whole Sub B class tested whether the children could differentiate between Left and Right. Briefly, the children had been given worksheets requiring them to connect visual impressions with the letters L and R. The class teacher had been given the exercises in advance by the LSP teacher. Teacher A took the class through the exercise, carefully explaining what was required. From what I could gather from peering over the shoulders of the children, roughly two-thirds got the correct answer while one-third could not distinguish between Left and Right. Teacher A expressed disillusionment at the lack of progress (the same results had emerged the previous term, monitored by herself), implying that the class teacher had not done her bit in preparation. "Some teachers might feel that children can do Right and Left at the drop of a hat" (1995a).

Following discussions with teachers, the listening skills programme in the third term honed in on "following instructions using meaningful situations". In the fourth term was added self-evaluation by the children - that is, marking their own worksheets - "to reduce anxiety" and "to help them discover their own potential" (Teacher A 1995b:7).

Whether or not this type of listening skills activity helped children discover their own potential is an issue that goes beyond the scope of this study.

8.3. Assessing the LSP

This section must of necessity be brief, as it relies exclusively for its findings on the views of the LSP teachers and some members of the school staff, respectively. Since the purpose of the research was not to assess the language learning outcomes of the 'withdrawn' children in relation to the others, no empirical assessment of the programme was attempted. Learners' views have not been canvassed. No experimental and control groups were set up and monitored. No performance measures were introduced. No questionnaires were administered to the teachers. And no assessment of the programme's effects on social indicators such as repetition or school drop-out rates was possible. The views expressed should be seen in the context of the recency of the programme. Given these constraints, no more than a few remarks are possible at this stage.

In his response to my question about the progress achieved by the LSP teachers, the Principal declared himself "elated by their results." He had witnessed a "remarkable improvement" after only three weeks of LSP. Yet he acknowledged that

> it's difficult to find out [the needs of the JP children] because of the language issue. The child can't tell you what his problem is. He can't understand in the first place. How can he explain to the teacher why he can't understand certain things, or grasp certain concepts?

He felt the itinerants were doing a very good job, and wished they could "put in more hours per week" at the school. He was realistic enough to caution that the progress of the programme would be measurable only in the medium to long term. "After three years only will we be able to monitor the standard of remediation" (Principal).

Offering an overview, LSP Coordinator reported that class teachers all over the province "are very happy with the impact...from this assistance." There was no formal evaluation system to measure the impact of the LSP. Instead, programme staff relied on teacher reports on how the children were coping in the mainstream.

Programme staff were positive about the progress achieved in the withdrawal groups. Informal assessment was done by means of 'diagnostic teaching' on an ongoing basis. Teacher A was "thrilled with their progress" in her groups. Children revelled in the support groups, and loved to do physical things for tangible rewards. Teacher B said that children loved enacting stories, but that it had taken them the best part of the year to begin to talk more freely with her. This optimism was not shared by the Sub A programme teacher, who didn't think that Sub A children were ready to work independently without "fighting and killing each other and not talking" (Teacher E). Teacher F's evaluative comment that "the

English children are on a higher social level than these Bantu children who couldn't understand a word of English" is best left unremarked.

With regard to the listening skills whole-class lessons, the prognosis was less sanguine from the programme staff side. Teacher A observed how `her' children lost all confidence back in the large class "because they've got no status there." She saw "almost no progress" in the regular classes: children were frightened and insecure in the large class, not wanting to make a mistake. These comments reflect badly on the class teacher concerned.

With one exception, the JP staff were fairly reserved when asked by the LSP staff about their feelings on the programme at a joint meeting in November. The one favourable comment came from a Sub A class teacher, who said she felt the language assistants had "done wonders". Children had "gained a lot of confidence" as a result of the LSP intervention.

8.4. Typologising language programmes at School X

Arriving at a classification or typology for the language learning programmes on offer at School X is more complicated than appears at first glance. This is largely due to the existence of parallel medium streams, each with their own language composition[74]. A second reason is the uneven application of the Language Support Programme across the JP grades (i.e. Sub A, B, Std 1), resulting in differentiated programmes and (projected) language learning processes and outcomes. The weekly listening skills lesson reaches all JP children since it is taught to the whole class, but is discounted for present purposes since its impact appears to be minimal[75]. The withdrawal classes or pull-out groups, on the other hand, have had some effect and therefore merit separate mention. These reach roughly one-third of the children. The overwhelming majority of children in the pull-out groups are Xhosa-speaking[76], with a small minority of Afrikaans-speakers. The following table `locates' the LSP within the JP phase as a whole.

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[74] Cf `School X: a language profile' (section 6.1)

[75] LSP staff were unanimous on this point, feeling that class teachers on the whole were not `doing their bit' to reinforce the listening skills lesson.

[76] For present purposes no distinction is possible between Xhosa L1 speakers and L1 speakers of Sotho, Tsonga, Zulu or any of the other (South) African languages which the Principal indicated were represented at School X; all are simply classified as Xhosa-speakers.

SCHOOL X's JP SECTION: TYPOLOGY OF LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES						
Type of learner	Language Stream	Type of programme	Language of classroom	admin	Language Learning Process	Outcome
Xhosa L1	English	Submersion	L2 (non-cognate) (+ L3)	L2 (non-cognate) (+ L3)	non-additive	restricted B/ML
Xhosa L1	English	Submersion with L2 pull-out	L2 (non-cognate) (+ L3)	L2 (non-cognate) (+ L3)	non-additive/ remedial	restricted B/ML
Xhosa L1	Afrikaans	Submersion with L2 pull-out	L2 (non-cognate) (+ L3)	L3 (+ L2, non-cognate)	non-additive/ remedial	restricted B/ML
Afrikaans L1	English	Immersion	L2 (cognate) (+ L1)	L2 (+ L1)	weakly additive	limited B/ML
Afrikaans L1	Afrikaans	Mainstream	L1 (+ L2)	L2 (+ L1)	additive	intermediate B/ML
Afrikaans L1	Afrikaans	Mainstream with L1 pull-out	L1 (+ L2)	L2 (+ L1)	additive	intermediate B/ML
English L1	English	Mainstream	L1 (+ L2)	L1 (+ L2)	additive	intermediate B/ML

Table 8

The JP phase at School X is representative of the bifurcation and language discrimination that characterises education in South Africa. Broadly, English and Afrikaans speakers are advantaged at the expense of Xhosa speakers as they enjoy home-language teaching and learning, with some language support in the case of the 'weaker' Afrikaans speakers. Xhosa-speakers, on the other hand, are submerged in a medium that is at best a second language and in many cases closer to a foreign language since it is not heard in the home. While assessment of the language learning and other cognitive and affective outcomes has not been part of this study, it is safe to assume that Xhosa-speakers are likely to benefit less all round in relation to their English- and Afrikaans-speaking peers.

Within the general trend outlined above, Table 8 illustrates some of the distinctions that can usefully be made with regard to language stream, type of programme, language of the classroom and of school administration, and the likely language learning processes and outcomes of particular programmes for the respective (types of) learners. The typology begins with learners since schooling centres on them and is constitutionally obliged to provide all learners with equal and meaningful access to education. The school's two (parallel) language streams are English and Afrikaans. At least three-quarters of all the children are in the English stream. Programme types are classified in accordance with definitions and examples provided in Chapter 2. Briefly,

- *submersion* programmes provide for second-language teaching-and-learning, with no first-language maintenance or support

- *submersion with pull-out* refers to structured language support (i.e. withdrawal classes) within the submersion programme
- *immersion* programmes provide for second-language teaching and learning, with L1 maintenance as a subject and some oral support
- *mainstream* programmes are defined by first-language teaching and learning, with the L1 and the L2 offered as a subject or in an integrative way for part of the day in the case of JP
- *mainstream with L1 pull-out* refers to structured home-language support (withdrawal classes) for L1 speakers of the LoLT.

Language use has been divided into language of the *classroom*, and of *administration*, respectively. Language of the *classroom* was deemed to be a more accurate description than the LoLT/LaS distinction usually made, as early childhood development (ECD) lessons are generally presented in an integrated way and not as clearly demarcated subjects. A distinction was made between cognate and non-cognate languages[77] in relation to English, as this may contribute decisively to teachers' perceptions that Xhosa-speakers experience greater learning difficulties than Afrikaans-speakers in the English stream. Thus for L1 Xhosa speakers submerged in the English stream, the language of the classroom is at best a non-cognate second language, and in some instances equivalent to a non-cognate third or foreign language. In cases where Afrikaans is taught as part of the curriculum, both languages of the classroom are non-cognates of Xhosa. For L1 Afrikaans speakers immersed in the English stream, on the other hand, the language gap to be bridged is likely to be comparatively smaller since Afrikaans and English are cognates and the teacher is fluent in both languages. Crucially, for Afrikaans speakers all reading and writing takes place in a cognate language. This is not the case for the Xhosa speakers[78].

The school's languages of administration were mentioned separately as they underline the difficulties faced by L1 Xhosa speaking children and their parents in communication with school management and the staff. Until such a time as communication with children (through assemblies, announcements, and notice-boards) and with parents (via school notices and PTAs) takes place through the medium of Xhosa also, the school's main constituencies will be disadvantaged. The issue is particularly burning at a time when the

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[77] Cognate languages are languages that have been shown to have a common ancestor (Crystal 1987:292). English and Afrikaans belong to the same language family (Indo-European), and thus classify as cognates. English and Xhosa, on the other, are non-cognates as Xhosa is a member of the Niger-Congo language family. Pertinently, Gough (1994:10) stresses that "learning a cognate language is much easier than learning a non-cognate language. Learning Sotho is for a Xhosa speaking person easier than learning English, just as for an English speaking person it is easier to learn Afrikaans than to learn Zulu."

[78] Any systematic investigation of literacy practices and proficiencies amongst the Xhosa-speaking children would be sure to unearth this obvious discrepancy. Emergent literacy has not been the focus of this study, however.

South African Schools Act gives parents, via governing bodies, far greater say than previously over the day-to-day running of the school and matters such as language policy.

On the basis of the information available for this study, no definitive pronouncements can be made with regard to *language learning processes and outcomes* in children. However, research results from comparable situations suggest[79] that the language learning processes for most L1 Xhosa-speakers at School X are likely to be non-additive and the outcomes at best a limited form of bilingualism. For those involved in the withdrawal classes (i.e. those adjudged to be weakest in English and Afrikaans, respectively) with their remedial, compensatory ethos, the language learning outcomes may vary from a remedial monolingualism to a limited form of bilingualism. In the absence of any home language maintenance or support, Xhosa-speakers' chances of becoming advanced or even intermediate bilinguals appear remote. For L1 Afrikaans speakers in the Afrikaans stream as well as L1 English speakers in the English stream, by contrast, home-language mainstream teaching and learning coupled with adequate exposure to the additional classroom language is likely to constitute an additive process with intermediate bilingual proficiency. L1 Afrikaans speaking children immersed in the English stream constitute an in-between category, at least on paper. For those with no English exposure at home, the language learning process is likely to be no more than weakly additive at best, with limited bilingualism as outcome. For those coming from bilingual (Afrikaans/English) homes, on the other hand, the outcomes may be slightly more favourable.

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[79] See Chapters 2 and 3.

While every effort has been made to be non-judgmental, it is in the very nature of research that evaluative comments cannot be avoided. Research is not a neutral activity, but an *interested* enquiry.

In summing up our study of the Language Support Programme at School X, it is necessary to reflect on the programme within the institutional context of School X and against the broader language-in-education policy background in South Africa. This has to be done circumspectly since - and this point should be stressed - no evaluation of the programme itself was undertaken and since it may well be too early in any event to assess the specific outcomes of the LSP after only a year of operation. What we can and should do is to reflect briefly on the LSP's history, its operationalisation, and the assumptions held by its teachers about language development in early childhood, and measure these assumptions and practices against current theories and practices elsewhere in order to arrive at some pointers to the future.

On the assumption that the LSP experience within the School X context is generalisable across institutions, we need to ask what implications arise for language support more broadly. The key issue is whether language support programmes constitute a viable response to multilingualism, not only in pre-schools and schools in the Western Cape, but across different institutional contexts. A related issue is the extent to which the notion of language support is congruent with the language-in-education policy framework that is gradually emerging out of a lengthy process of policy formulation.

Three influences that have shaped the LSP at School X will be briefly highlighted here. These relate to the origins of the LSP, the assumptions about second-language development held by LSP staff, and the drive for English on the part of parents. A final question to be answered is: what future is there for language support in South African primary schools?

9.1. Origins

The first point that helps us understand the nature of the Language Support Programme at School X is that it is the product of two intersecting trajectories or historical processes.

The first is the remedial orientation of the Speech & Hearing Services, born of the need to assist children with learning difficulties in a *first-language* environment. SHS in the Western Cape were traditionally available only to 'white' children with special speech

and/or hearing difficulties (e.g. stuttering, cleft palate, partial deafness etc.) that hampered their learning through the medium of their *home or first* language. Thus SHS support was primarily intended as an adjunct to *L1* teaching and learning, not as a compensatory strategy for children learning through the medium of an *additional* language. Since learners with such special needs were mainstreamed in schools all over the Western Cape region, the SHS teachers were forced to become itinerant in order to attend to them. The number of learners needing remedial services in any one school was relatively small, making it feasible for an itinerant teacher to work with each individual or in small groups and feel that progress was achieved.

The second historical process was the SHS's sudden encounter with multilingual classes. This occurred after the historic amalgamation of the various education departments in 1994 and the subsequent extension of SHS to the historically-`coloured' schools, many of which had experienced a gradual inflow of Xhosa-speaking learners over the years. For the first time the now-renamed Language Assistance Service (LAS) was confronted with a situation in which learners studying through the medium of an *additional* language (i.e. not their home or first language) were in dire need of language support. At School X it was the *majority* of learners, not a small minority, who experienced learning difficulties, due in no small measure to the language barrier. For teachers and pupils had no language in common. Effective teaching and learning proved almost impossible in a situation in which English/Afrikaans bilingual class teachers were expected to facilitate meaningful learning through the medium of English and Afrikaans, respectively, to L1 speakers of Xhosa. It was an anomalous situation, and one for which their training and experience had not prepared the teaching staff. The LAS staff were called in to ameliorate a situation for which they, too, were not trained. It called for some creative improvisation. The Language Support Programme was the result. Thus the LSP was the product of a remedial orientation and new multilingual realities.

9.2. Assumptions about second-language learning

The second point worth repeating is that the assumptions held by LSP staff about second-language development in young children derive from a mixture of behaviourism, or a view of language development as the acquisition of a set of habits (Hakuta & Cancino 1991:76), and what might be termed classroom pragmatism.

The LSP-held assumption about language development that is most consonant with behaviourism is a belief that the second language is best acquired through listening, imitation and pattern drills. The belief that listening skills are the basis of all language learning is characteristic of Audiolingualism, and resulted in teacher-centred lessons in which children were viewed as passive receptacles of bite-sized pieces of (target)

language input. Where it was not the LoLT, learners' home language was seen as a problem by LSP staff. A concomitant belief was that maximal exposure to the target language was best for L2 learners, and that the only acceptable variety of oral language production was the standard variety. This approach was consonant with a focus on phonics, or the sounding out of letters with a view to predicting word pronunciation and spelling. The inappropriacy of a phonics approach for L2 learners, the `hit-and-miss' dimension in the case of English, and its unconscious linguicism together made phonics an extremely problematic aspect of the programme.

The behaviourist philosophy underpinning much of the LSP was tempered to some degree by a classroom-based pragmatism which began to take into account the lived world and interests of the children. Examples include the increased use of stories, albeit often in small chunks and in order to teach grammar better; the search for culturally more appropriate learning material, such as the story of Sipho[80]; the emphasis on physical enactment in `language alongside a concrete experience'; and the tolerance, especially necessary at the beginning of the year, of the use of some code-switching into and from Xhosa by the children in the withdrawal groups. All these strategies can be said to have evolved as desperation measures when other approaches and materials were not working, and testify to an ability on the part of LSP staff to adapt creatively to an extremely difficult situation. However, on the available evidence these ameliorating strategies did little more than soften the edges of a behaviourist approach whose goal it was to do something which language support was not originally intended to do, namely facilitate access to a target language for second-language learners with the goal of assimilating them into society.

9.3. The lure of English & the loathing of home languages

A third factor that has shaped the LSP is the hidden hand of parental desire to have children become proficient in English. Although parents were not interviewed for this study, the demand for access to English is unambiguous and overwhelming. This can safely be deduced from the sheer weight of numbers of Xhosa-speakers in the English stream, and the effective firing of the only L1 Xhosa-speaking teacher from the staff of School X at the insistence of the `African' parents. Moreover, the lure of English is not unique to School X. Research conducted by Bloch et al (1996), Crawford (1996), and Young et al (1996), amongst others, shows a sweeping move towards English on the part of `African' parents in the Western Cape. This is likely to be the trend in most parts of the country.

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[80] See Appendix 3.

The ousting of the L1 Xhosa-speaking teacher illustrates not only the lure of English but another legacy of apartheid language policies in education for `Africans': a rejection of L1 teaching and learning. From the beginnings of formal state control over education for `Africans' with the advent of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, state attempts to extend `mother tongue instruction' in schooling met with resistance from `African' students, teachers and parents. While opposition to `mother tongue instruction' was never as volatile as the eventual rejection of Afrikaans in 1976 as a medium of teaching and learning in schools for `Africans', it remains strong because of its association with the impoverished education of the former DET.

This powerful perception makes any attempt to reintroduce and extend home-language LoLT policies a hazardous undertaking. This much is illustrated in the following response by the Principal of School X:

> *Interviewer: How would you go about attempting to persuade parents, for instance, to accept Xhosa as a subject, if not as a medium of instruction?*
>
> Principal: I would have to call a meeting and get the feeling of all those parents. Obviously they are the ones to decide whether or not to have Xhosa as a medium of instruction. I would have to get another set of teachers for those streams. It would mean having one Xhosa speaker for every second standard - two teachers for Stds 2 and 3, two for Standards 4 & 5. We would need the services of at least another five or six teachers. For the JP we would need one per class. I would be guided by the parents. To convince them that their children should learn in their mother tongue would be a very difficult task. They would object that resources up to Std 7 are very limited... There are limitations to having Xhosa medium of instruction. That is why they opt to enrol their children either in the English-medium stream, or in the Afrikaans medium stream in the case of people from the country.

In similar vein, Crawford notes,

> I have heard the suspicion voiced more than once by black parents that the concern for their children to learn their first language is really to keep them trapped in the old Bantu Education paradigm. (1996:29)

What has yet to be pointed out with sufficient clarity to African-language speaking parents is the difference between the new multilingual paradigm and the old Bantu Education. Parents need to know that the best route to meaningful education for their children is likely to be through strong programmes for multilingualism. This necessarily entails home-language teaching and learning throughout school wherever practicable[81], with an

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[81] Clearly, practicability is a crucial variable. In terms of individual rights as set out in the Bill of Rights, education takes precedence over choice of language medium, which is subject to the practicability clause. The reason for the hierarchy (education first, language second) is obvious: in a multilingually composed classroom with 6 or 7 home languages, as is common in Mpumalanga schools, for example, students should have the right to insist on meaningful access to education. Yet it would almost certainly be

additional language as a second LoLT. This in turn requires the development of the (South) African languages. Parents and educators in South Africa need to be conscientised carefully as to the value of the universally-acknowledged 'mother-tongue principle'. For

> The last time attempts were made to develop African languages as media of instruction was precisely during the apartheid era, and their capacities as languages for learning was a point often stressed by apartheid ideologues. (Gough 1994:10)

At the same time, the demand for access to English dictates that every effort be made to provide access to what is fast becoming a universal second language; in other words, that the unparalleled power and status of English be given due recognition. Any policy that fails to heed the 'home-language first' principle, is doomed to educational failure. Similarly, any policy that ignores the demand for English is certain to be unacceptable politically. It is not a case of 'either-or', but of 'both-and'.

In the process, care should be taken not to portray the (South) African languages as mere instruments for the learning of English. This line of arguing (criticised as 'anglocentric' by Alexander [1994]) holds that the best way of marketing the indigenous languages in education would be to highlight the positive spin-off effects of home-language LoLT policies as a means to the end of acquiring a second language, i.e. proficiency in English. "Learn Xhosa to learn English" aptly illustrates this approach, one that is held by Young et al (1996). Such an approach accords African languages mere instrumental value. By denying or underplaying the inherent value of the African languages this strategy runs the risk of perpetuating in a new guise the deficit thinking characteristic of apartheid language policies. Far from encouraging African-languages speakers from taking their languages seriously, it is likely to merely reinforce existing notions of their inherent inferiority, and may fail to challenge 'straight-for-English' approaches in education. The instrumentalist view also does not challenge the racist assumption that African languages themselves are incapable of ever becoming fully-fledged languages of trade, politics, science and technology up to the highest levels of sophistication. This may not be the intention of the instrumentalist approach; but it may well be its lasting effect.

Rather, the (South) African languages should be promoted as languages in their own right. Indigenous languages should be accorded the dignity and inherent value otherwise reserved for the world's high status languages such as English and French. To be credible, educators taking this "inherent value" approach will need help from other quarters. The constitutions have pointed the way in this regard. The status of African languages will have to be raised on all fronts, including Parliament, the formal economic

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impracticable for the school to offer L1 teaching and learning policies to every student. (David Brown, personal communication, 1996).

sector, higher education, the courts, the civil service, the public broadcaster and so on, for educators to have a chance of being believed when they propound the inherent value of African languages as markers of identity and repositories of indigenous (forms of) knowledge and customs. Educators will also need the help of terminologers and lexicographers, publishers and educational administrators who, together with NGOs and other role-players `from below', could develop the corpus of the indigenous languages to become fully-fledged codes for economic, scientific, sporting and artistic development. Failure to support the multilingual educational project with a scaffold of status and corpus planning initiatives would lead parents and teachers to continue rejecting indigenous languages as the `poor country cousins' of English. An approach highlighting the inherent value of the African languages (and thereby of their speakers, uncoincidentally) would appear to have the better chance of persuading parents and teachers that indigenous languages are indispensable resources in their children's future, than one which merely emphasises the instrumental role of African languages as a means towards the end of learning English.

How this conscientisation of a whole nation could be achieved is a practical issue. Informing parents and teachers about the educational advantages of strong forms of education for bi/multilingualism is likely to be a massive and time-consuming task. The LANGTAG report (1996) recommends the use of a number of strategies by which this might be achieved, including the use of language awareness campaigns. Information evenings at school and district level, and concerted drives to inform school governing bodies about the implications of the new language policy could and should form part of this strategy. This is especially urgent considering the increased powers and functions given to school governing bodies by the South African Schools Act (1996), including the right to decide on a language policy for the school (provided it is in synchrony with the relevant provincial and national legislation). Attitude shifts and changes in teaching approaches are notoriously difficult for educators to accomplish. However, research by Leibowitz (1992) and Bruynse (1996) shows that teachers are capable of shifts in attitude if they begin with the linguistic resources of their own students and are open to changing their practice.

A second, albeit longer term strategy would be to establish experimental schools which demonstrate the feasibility and validity of various models of multilingual education[82]. Ideally such schools would be set up in each of the provinces to test the theories underpinning education for multilingualism under different conditions. Quite clearly educational models for multilingualism require a whole new dimension to teacher

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[82] The PRAESA proposal for a multilingual demonstration school in the Western Cape has the in-principle backing of the provincial and national departments of education, and awaits realisation.

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education[83], as well as a massive investment in the production and publication of textbooks and other learning materials in African languages. A discussion of these issues goes beyond the scope of this minithesis, however.

9.4. Language support & the future

To conclude it is necessary to return briefly to our immediate topic and to ask whether there is a future for language support within the burgeoning paradigm of education for multilingualism in South Africa. We have seen that while the Language Support Programme at School X superficially constitutes a response to multilingualism, at a deeper level it represents precisely the opposite: a drive to proficiency in one dominant language only. The existence of an Afrikaans stream at School X should not obscure the fact that for the vast majority of people that dominant language is English.

The answer to whether language support has a future has already been implied throughout this study. In general, second-language support is likely to be not only fruitless, but wasteful of scarce resources and therefore ultimately unaffordable for the state. Our example of the evolution of the Speech & Hearing Services shows that the initial focus was strictly on children with learning difficulties in their *first* language. This meant providing remedial treatment for only a small *minority* of learners per school, and gave rise to the itinerant nature of the job. The subsequent shift to supporting the *second* (or even *third*) language of the vast *majority* of learners, as at School X, marks a paradigm shift towards something language support was not designed to do. All available research evidence suggests that half an hour per week of language support in the students' L2, in a context in which no timetable space has been allotted the L1 stands very little chance of succeeding.

The real issue is that most learners at School X are not receiving education through the medium of the language/s they know best. As a consequence, the 'LoLT variable' has not been removed from considerations of language support. Had the school been able to provide a Xhosa-medium stream, for instance, or (more ambitiously) a dual-medium Xhosa-English stream plus a dual-medium Xhosa-Afrikaans stream parallel to it, the need for language support would have been more easily identifiable since the LoLT variable would have been removed. For it is impossible to identify genuine learning difficulties unless children are already learning through their primary language/s and language barriers have been removed; learning difficulties can only be identified if language is not an obstacle. This was immediately recognised by the LSP Co-ordinator who accordingly

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[83] See, for instance, ELTIC's Diteme Tsa Thuto distance education course for teachers; and the proposed Further Diploma in Multilingual Education, to be offered jointly for in-service teachers by PRAESA and UCT's School of Education from 1997.

argued against the standard practice of psychometric testing on the children of School X to determine who needed language support. The deficit approach implied by the school's language policy, when taken to its logical conclusion, rightly suggested "that the need was for massive assistance" (LSP Co-ordinator). In accordance with the original role of the SHS, L1 support for the Xhosa-speakers would have been the most appropriate form of language support in such circumstances. The LSP was providing, in effect, a legitimisation of an educationally-indefensible (although politically pragmatic) LoLT policy at School X. The fact is that in the absence of Xhosa-speaking staff, English- and Afrikaans-language support was all the LSP *could* do. Thus the agendas of the school and of the LSP neatly dovetailed.

Language support should ideally be mainstreamed. Research from the UK (Levine 1990) has documented the early problems of the `pull-out' type of language support, among these the lack of continuity in the curriculum for those `withdrawn' from the mainstream, the stigma attached to the programme and its `clients', the `business as usual' approach from mainstream teaching staff, and the often ambiguous status of itinerant language support teachers in relation to school staff. A progressive attitude would be to equip teachers with the wherewithal to facilitate learning in `mixed ability' classrooms in which individual learners' needs (particularly language needs) are taken into account in a more systematic way than at present. This would entail team-teaching and more group work amongst learners in the mainstream class, and a phasing out of the idea of `pull-out' groups.

The problem with remedial *second*-language support is not only its low return on investment. Its assumptions are fundamentally wrong. Even if second-language support could be extended to every single learner in every school, it would still fail to address the basic issue, namely the need to provide learners with education through the medium of the primary language/s. That is the challenge faced by the education system as a whole, and by each school individually. It is only once schools begin implementing strong forms of language policies for multilingualism that the need for language support (in the LoLTs) will begin to emerge.

9.5. Promoting bi/multilingualism: revisiting keywords

A key question underlying this minithesis has been: In a multilingual context, what educational programmes best promote equal access to meaningful education, cognitive growth, and individual integration into the political economy? This study has suggested that programmes which promote the acquisition of two or more languages to an advanced degree are most likely to succeed for the largest number of learners. The exact

configurations of such programmes will differ according to context, and their variety demands a high degree of flexibility.

A useful pair of concepts in this regard is the difference between what Gough calls *formative* and *supportive* mediums.

> The formative medium should be the medium through which fundamental concepts in a subject are consistently developed. The supportive medium should consistently not be used in such formative contexts, but rather be used for supportive and clarifying purposes - with the learners in mind. If two media do not have such distinct roles it is hard to see how students can be expected to perform (in essays, and examinations, for example) in one medium or the other, as required.
> (1994:11)

A fruitful approach to promoting multilingualism via LoLT policies in ex-DET schools may be to think in terms of two phases. Phase one would start with the reality of English-medium policies from senior primary upwards, and posit English as the *formative* medium, with the home language/s as *supportive* medium. Over time, as the indigenous (*Bantu*) languages acquire higher status and more resources become available in them, the learner's home language could and should become the *formative* medium, with English relegated to the role of *supportive* medium (phase two).

A further issue has been the need for greater rigour in developing key concepts. This concerns particularly the keywords of bi/multilingualism and the associated descriptors additive and subtractive. This study has taken the view that it is more useful to speak *of education for multilingualism,* than of multilingual education; and of *strong* and *weak forms* of education for multilingualism, rather than of additive and subtractive bi/multilingualism. This is because our formulation focuses attention squarely on the individual language learner and her/his needs, rather than on the systems designed to service the learner. Furthermore, the labels *additive* and *non-additive* are best applied to language-learning *processes*; and language learning *outcomes* are best described in terms of *restricted, limited, intermediate* and *advanced* proficiency in two or more languages. This use of *outcomes* has the advantage of connecting with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) concept of outcomes-based education and training[84], and may pave the way for making meaningful distinctions between essential and specific outcomes. For example, an essential outcome of a particular LoLT/LaS policy may be to enable students to communicate effectively in spoken and written discourse in at least two languages. A specific outcome may be the ability to write a *curriculum vitae* and letter of application at

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[84] For an easily accessible introduction to the NQF, *see Understanding the National Qualifications Framework. A Guide to Lifelong Learning,* published by the Education Information Centre and the Independent Examinations Board in association with Heinemann (1996).

an *advanced* level of proficiency in standard Xhosa (in the case of L1 Xhosa speakers) and at an *intermediate* level of standard English, respectively, by the end of Grade 10.

It remains important to distinguish between language learning processes-and-outcomes, on the one hand, and language policies or programme designs, on the other, because it permits greater differentiation. Thus some kinds of transitional programmes, for instance, may constitute *strong forms of education for bilingualism* (because the outcome is advanced bilingualism in the majority of learners), while other kinds may be *weak forms* (because only a minority of learners attain advanced bilingualism). Apart from the learner's home language, variables such as the teacher's degree of bilingual proficiency, availability of appropriate teaching and learning aids, learner motivation and parental involvement and environmental support for the learning of two or more languages are all crucial variables in determining to what extent programmes promote advanced bi/multilingualism in learners.

9.6. A research need

The research for this study was done in a historically-`coloured' Cape Flats school where the LoLTs were English and Afrikaans, all the teachers were bilingual in these two languages, and most of the children were L1 Xhosa-speakers. Other studies such as those by Schlebusch (1994), Young et al (1996) and Bloch et al (1996), have similarly concentrated on language practices in English/Afrikaans medium schools with growing enrolments of Xhosa-speakers. However, the majority of schools in the country, the former DET (-equivalent) schools, are largely neglected in terms of investigations into language policy and practice on a day-to-day basis. One reason may be the low status of these schools. Another may be that research capacity in this country has historically been the province of English and Afrikaans L1 speakers who by and large know too little of the African languages to undertake effective research in ex-DET schools. This raises the crucial issue of agency, and the need to train a generation of African-language speaking researchers to systematically uncover existing language practices and attitudes towards language prevalent in the ex-DET schools. Only once an audit of language needs and resources is properly underway can the notion of language support, so long the exclusive preserve of `whites' only, be meaningfully revisited for African-language speaking learners.

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LSP Co-ordinator, 6 November

Principal, School X , 15 November

Teacher A, 24 October

Teacher B, 31 October

Teacher E & Teacher F, 12 November

Teacher H, 15 November

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

A "Project proposal for the establishment of a demonstration school to explore multilingual teaching strategies[,] and for the training of teachers in multilingual education under South African conditions" has the following key features (PRAESA 1995):

1. *The multilingual demonstration school* will provide a dynamic learning environment where research and teaching practice in multilingual education are integrated and inform each other on an ongoing basis....
2. *A teacher-training module on multilingual education*
   In different permutations the module will receive accreditation from the universities and the colleges of education as part fulfilment of the requirements for relevant degrees and diplomas.
3. *School-based change strategies and support services* for teachers struggling in the short term with the new demands of the multilingual classrooms and schools in to which they have been catapulted.
4. *The school within a multi-functional centre*
   As an integral part of performing its role as an elementary school (combined pre/primary), the demonstration school will, together with a cluster of educational institutions, respond to the cultural, social and educational needs of the community which it serves.

Two models of additive multilingual education would be trialled at the demonstration school. In sum, the eventual goal of the project is the promotion of meaningful learning for all learners through an integrated curriculum and an ensemble of multilingual strategies facilitated by competent trilingual teachers that would result in the development of trilingualism in learners. In the past few months the proposed teacher-training module has been recast as a Further Diploma in Multilingual Education, which is likely to be offered jointly by PRAESA and UCT's School of Education from 1997 under the auspices of the latter.

APPENDIX 2

A practical example of a teacher-centred withdrawal class that clearly failed to capture the children's imagination is the following extract from field notes taken during non-participant observation of a Sub A English-medium class.

> Teacher G (henceforth T) instructs children to each take one koki of each of the four colours: red, green, yellow, and purple (for blue). Once everyone has them, and has sat down, T does vocabulary exercise via flashcards: chicken to hen, baby rabbit to mother rabbit, baby squirrel to mother squirrel. T says the first name of the pairing, prompts class as a whole to say the dichotomous half. The children do so, although very reticently and softly, so that the exercise has to be repeated. T corrects their pronunciation of "bird" (`not "bed"!').
>
> T then traces her finger along the dotted line drawn on the worksheet, a copy of which has been given to each child. Children mutely follow her example.
>
> T switches on an audio tape of instructions to background music. She had wanted to play the children some Mozart to calm them, but couldn't find any and so had to settle for Richard Clayderman, she had told me prior to the lesson.
>
> Instructions on the tape are as follows [in Teacher G's voice]: "Write your name on the top of the page, any colour you like."
>
> Then: "Draw a blue line from the baby rabbit to his mother."
>
> T writes Bonginkosi's[85] name for him because he has not done so himself, even when T suggests he write only "Bongi". T comments that one child has written his name the wrong way round, in mirror image, as it were. [This mystery is solved later.] A few similar instructions emanate from the voice on the tape recorder, and children dutifully draw lines in various colours. Some get it right, most don't. I am allowed to patrol up and down and see how children are progressing. Then it's time for the children to go as the next class has already arrived.

One explanation why this type of passive learning approach was soon abandoned was the following comment: "It was boring. We basically told the children what to say, and still we didn't know what they knew. They had to say what we knew, and what we told them to say" (Teacher B). The comment is noteworthy for the implied criticism of this teacher-oriented approach that failed to engage the children's interest, although it is still a long way off from facilitating "the active construction of knowledge by the student" (Freeman & Freeman 1992:7).

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[85]Not his real name. Names of students have been changed to protect their identity.

How Sipho starts his day

These pictures tell us a story about a boy called Sipho. Look at each picture, then look in the wordbox. Find the sentence that matches each picture. Write the sentences under the matching pictures.

Eek!! I'm late!

WORDBOX

After breakfast, Sipho brushes his teeth.
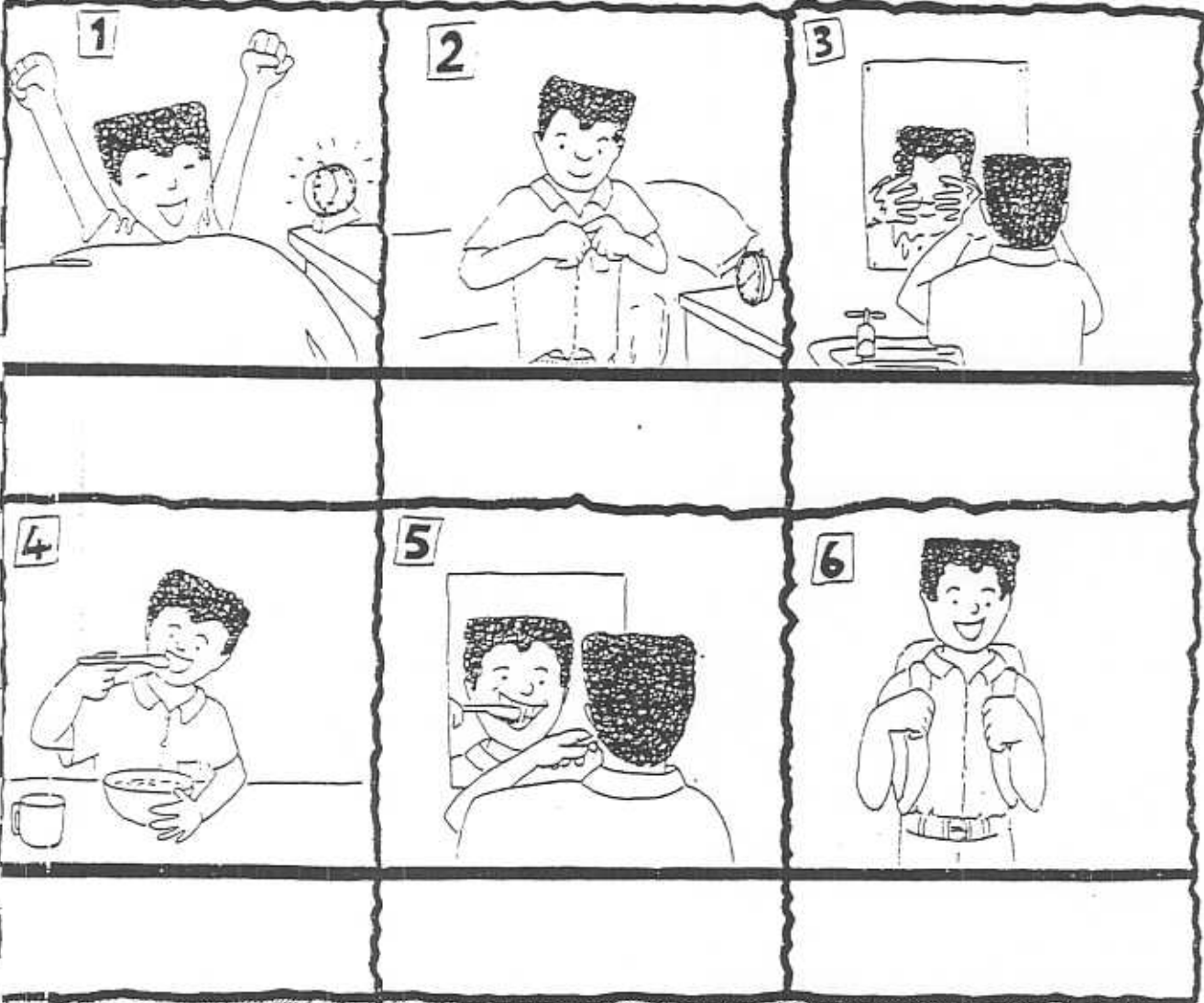
Then Sipho eats breakfast.

He washes his face in the bathroom.

Sipho wakes up at seven o'clock.

Now Sipho is ready to go to school.

He dresses himself in his school clothes.