

https://dspace.org/

Success stories of multilingual literacy A case study of Ife 1970 Nigerias project and the 2002 Western Cape LOITASAs project in South Africa

Modupe Aroge; Leketi Makalela; Peter Merisi

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/43358
DOAJ

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)
ISSN – Online 2720-7722 | Print 2821-8949
Volume 5 Issue 13 October 2024 pp 2231-2241
Available online at: https://noyam.org/journals/ehass/
DOI: https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202451318

Success Stories of Multilingual Literacy: A Case Study of Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the 2002 Western Cape's LOITASA's Project in South Africa

Modupe Grace Aroge [1], Leketi Makalela[1] & Peter Merisi [1]
[1] University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg South Africa.

ABSTRACT

In a progressively interrelated world, the advancement of strong multilingual literacy skills among learners is of great importance. This article showcases successful multilingual literacy initiatives, analyzing their implementation and impact. The study revealed great positive influence on communities and individuals after the initiatives. The predominant aim is to give extra weight to the indispensable importance of appreciating and paying attention to linguistic diversity through effective multilingual/translanguaging literacy opening moves. Using a survey design, this study paid attention to documenting instances of multilingualism implementation in educational settings, purposefully selecting South Africa and Nigeria as central points. Using a qualitative approach, the research examined success stories by analyzing reports, publications, archival materials, and scholarly articles associated with the projects. Special attention was paid to the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the 2002 Western Cape LOITASA's project and the findings were presented in a descriptive narrative format. The study elaborated on the objectives, strategies, and results of these projects, presenting findings in a descriptive narrative format. Moreover, the study contributes valuable insights to the debates surrounding effective literacy practices in multilingual contexts. By presenting success stories from these African nations, the study provided practical guideposts for policymakers, educators, and practitioners who want to develop or improve multilingual literacy programs. Lastly, the findings stressed the significance of culturally responsive and context-specific approaches to literacy, proposing the adoption of multilingual/translanguaging pedagogies within school systems. Through these, the study will promote inclusive and efficient educational practices that honor and celebrate linguistic diversity.

Keywords: *Educational Outcomes, Language Diversity, Multilingual Education, Multilingual Literacy, Repertoire Knowledge*

Correspondence
Modupe Grace Aroge
Email: modupe.aroge@wits.ac.za

Publication History
Received: 14th June, 2024
Accepted: 13th September, 2024
Published online:
21st October, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Multilingual literacy has been a subject of significant interest with leading light success stories rising from different educational discussions around the world. Multilingual individuals have the ability to transmit information using a repertoire of more than two languages.[1] In addition, Makalela posits that monolingual

[1] J. Brutt-Griffler, *World English: A Study of Its Development* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2002); O. Garcia, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); A. Creese and A. Blackledge,

© 2024 The Author(s). Published and Maintained by Noyam Journals.
This is an open access article under the CCBY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

language-in-education policies are still prevalent, causing about language to continue to be a barrier to learning for many learners.[2] Akinwamide states that the use of cooperative language learning strategies can be effective in relieving students' anxiety, encouraging a supportive attitude toward language acquisition, and raising up self-esteem in a relatively relaxed environment.[3] Creese says that there is a need to move beyond the idea of an "acceptable" language, and instead adopt the diversity of language use.[4] She suggests the need to focus on "translanguaging", or the fluid use of multiple languages, rather than trying to classify languages into different categories. She emphasises that the student's home language and cultures should be re-incorporated into the classroom activities. Furthermore, Makalela argues that African multilingualism has consistently been interpreted through monoglossic paradigms, meaning that the perception concentrates on one language at a time, despite the stated intentions of different language policies in Sub-Saharan Africa.[5]

Furthermore, Garcia explores the relationships between language, identity and power.[6] She affirms that there is a need to move from a monolingual, standardized view of language and embrace the diversity of language use. She discovers that spoken language is not static but is constantly evolving and changing. She concludes that there should be a move towards a more inclusive and dynamic view of language. The findings of the above scholars imply that emphasis should be placed on the dynamics and fluid nature of spoken language and the need to move beyond a monolingual view of language in classroom settings. Also, the role of context in language use, cognitive, linguistic aspects, and social and political aspects of language cannot be overemphasised in any multilingual and multicultural setting.

Both Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape LOITASA's 2002 Project in South Africa serve as cogent case studies, each line-shooting a rich pattern of languages reflective of their historical, cultural, and social complexities. The linguistic diversity in these nations goes far beyond simple communication; it digs into the very framework of societal structures, affecting how individuals see themselves and engage with the world around them. Hence, this study aims to explore and analyse the success stories of the Ife 1970 Nigeria's and the Western Cape LOITASA's 2002 projects, shedding light on the broader implications for multilingual literacy initiatives.

The article depends on the following objectives: to survey multilingualism practices of the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape LOITASA's Project in South Africa, investigate the methods, materials, and approaches that have established them as successful in improving language skills and literacy outcomes, and lastly to synthesize the findings from the case studies to obtain valuable lessons and recommendations for future multilingual literacy drives.

The following research questions underlie the study:

1. What are the objectives and strategies used in Ife 1970 and the Western Cape LOITASA's projects in order to approach multilingualism?
2. What are the outcomes and impacts of the methods, materials and approaches used in the Ife 1970 and Western Cape LOITASA projects in order to improve language skills and literacy outcomes?
3. What are the key lessons and recommendations from the case studies of the two projects for future multilingual literacy initiatives?

Global World Views on Multilingual Education

Exploring the global world views on multilingual education presents a varied viewpoint shaped by diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts. For instance, Kalan explains that from the 1970s, there has been a remarkable emphasis on mother tongue-based multilingual education within educational research

Multilingualism: A Critical Perspectives (New York: Continum, 2010); M. Clyne, "Multilingualism," in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, ed. F. Coulmas (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 301–14; Leketi Makalela, "Moving out of Linguistic Boxes: The Effects of Translanguaging Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms," in *Language in Epistemic Access* (Routledge, 2018), 24–41.

[2] Leketi Makalela, "Community Elders' Narrative Accounts of Ubuntu Translanguaging: Learning and Teaching in African Education," *International Review of Education* 64, no. 6(December 1, 2018): 823–43,https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-018-9752-8.

[3] Timothy Kolade Akinwamide, "The Influence of Process Approach on English as Second Language Students' Performances in Essay Writing.," *English Language Teaching* 5, no. 3 (2012): 16–29.

[4] A. Creese, *Multilingualism and Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[5] Leketi Makalela, "Translanguaging as a Vehicle for Epistemic Access: Cases for Reading Comprehension and Multilingual Interactions," *Per Linguam* 31, no. 1 (May 22, 2015): 15, https://doi.org/10.5785/31-1-628.

[6] Garcia, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*.

communities and among policymakers worldwide.[7] In addition, as globalization advances, the substantial inflow and outflow of immigrants has transformed many major cities into multicultural societies, where dealing with multilingualism has become the standard measure for linguistic conditions in urban life. Loomi debates on which languages to use in schools are, at the centre, related more to views on multiculturalism than to linguistic development.[8] Considerable research shows that certain forms of bi/multilingual education generate additive bilingualism, which protects first language (L1) development. Makalela and da Silva, explain that the current language policies' portrayal of the Western classification of languages does not blend with the sociolinguistic structure of fluid multilingualism.[9] They recommend an evaluation of policies through translanguaging paradigms, highlighting the importance of not regarding any language as perfect when considered in separation from others. Hence, as societies contend with the complexities of a globalized context, it is vital to understand the implications, challenges, and accomplishments linked to multilingual education.

Short History of the Two Projects

The 1970 Ife Nigeria project, known as the Six-Year Primary Project (SYPP), was conducted at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in Ile-Ife. Firstly implemented in a single primary school, its success prompted expansion to ten additional schools, with three functioning as control groups. The project involved using Yoruba as the medium of instruction in all subjects throughout the six years of primary school. Its remarkable sight of success not only influenced the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1977 but also had a lasting impact.[10] Also, by 1991, Yoruba had become the language of instruction in 131 schools in Oyo State, leading to the creation of over 100 educational books in Yoruba Adegbija.[11] The key participants in the project were: (a) B. Fafunwa (b) I. O. Delano (c) A. J. Afolayan (d) J. A. F Sokoya (e) A. Laisebikan (f) J. Y. K Kerr (g) D. S Oke (h) J. R. Huntington (i) J. Macauley (j) B. Osibodu (k) A. Adaralegbe (l) J. O. Ogunlade (m) A. O. Euba (n) F. A. Irele (o) A. Salami. Furthermore, employing the Yoruba language for instruction was an intended effort to oppose colonial dominance, contending with the prevalent use of English as the primary mode of communication. This forward-looking educational approach, selective to Africa, was termed "anti-progress," reflecting a political standing posture against embracing non-western educational models Falola and Afolayan.[12] Moreover, the principal participants actively participated in the program with the general goal of exposing theoretical and psychological principles that expand the importance of the mother tongue in the cognitive processes and child education. According to Fafunwa, Macualey, and Sokoya; Falola and Afolayan, the Ife Six-Years Primary Project of the 1970s is considered highly successful, as it is acknowledged that many accomplished professionals across diverse fields today are individuals who took part in this program during their childhood.[13]

On the other hand, Desai explains that the Western Cape project, which was called the LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project, commenced in 2002 and received financial backing from the Norwegian University Fund (NUFU).[14] The project involved a long-term study across Grades 4 through 6 in two schools in the Western Cape. The first phase commenced in January

[7] Amir Kalan, *Who's Afraid of Multilingual Education?: Conversations with Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Jim Cummins, Ajit Mohanty and Stephen Bahry about the Iranian Context and Beyond*, vol. 15 (Multilingual Matters, 2016).

[8] C. Loomi, "Global Perspectives on Multilingualism," *Comparative Education Review* 56, no. 2 (May 12, 2012): 333–35, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259711338.

[9] Leketi Makalela and Kleber Aparecido da Silva, "Translanguaging and Language Policy in the Global South: Introductory Notes," *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada* 23, no. 1 (2023): e33203.

[10] M. Harley. "Is Nigeria's National Language Policy realistic?" *The Language & Culture Archives,* 5(2021). Retrieved on 4th March, 2024 from: https://www.sil.org/domain/literacy-and-education

[11] E. Adegbija, " Language Planning and Education in Africa Countries," in *Language of Instruction in African Education*, ed. M. Brock-Utne (Ibadan, Nigeria., 2004), 53–76.

[12] M. O. Afolayan and T. Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between* (Pan-African University Press., 2024), 176.

[13] A. B. Fafunwa, J. I. Macualey, and J. A. Funso Sokoya, *Education in Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Research Project* (Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1989); Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-BetweenI*, 193.

[14] Zubeida Desai, Martha Qorro, and Birgit Brock-Utne, *Educational Challenges in Multilingual Societies: LOITASA Phase Two Research* (African Books Collective, 2010), 207.

2002 and ended in 2006.[15] One class in each school chosen was designated to receive Science and Geography lessons in isiXhosa, while the other class remained taught in English, the primary language of instruction and the schools selected for the project were settled in disadvantaged communities like New Crossroads and Khayelitsha.[16] The LOITASA Project in South Africa was shaped by the Six Year Primary Project (SYPP) conveyed in the 1970s in the Ife Province in Nigeria and there are two groups in the project, the control group and the experimental groups.[17]

Furthermore, different conditions guided the design of the project. Firstly, it was assumed that languages develop through active usage. Secondly, it was expected that students would better comprehend the curriculum if presented in a familiar language. Additionally, the project proponents recognized the importance of students acquiring proficiency in English. A fourth assumption that guided the project was that achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals required prioritizing mother-tongue education. Moreover, a fifth assumption proposed that addressing access to mother-tongue education and considering which language groups were included were significant in bridging the gap between wealthy people's schools and underprivileged schools in the Western Cape.[18] The findings from the initial stage of the LOITASA project present advocacy for the acceptance of African languages as the primary medium of instruction in both Tanzania and South Africa because of the success story recorded at the end of the project.

Educational Implications of Multilingualism

Research has explored the educational implications of multilingualism, focusing on its potential benefits and challenges. The existence of multilingualism within educational environments not only introduces a variety of languages but also provides opportunities for improved cognitive abilities, cross-cultural comprehension, and inclusive teaching methods.[19] Also, according to Okal, multilingual practices in education bring advantages such as encouraging cultural awareness, contributing to academic and educational enrichment, promoting creativity, facilitating societal adaptation, and fostering an appreciation for local languages.[20] Ekene and Oluoch-Suleh argue that the importance of employing two or more languages as mediums of instruction in African high schools is vital in the education field.[21] They emphasize that the application of multiple languages in the teaching and learning process increases comprehension of ideas and it is affirmed to be advantageous for the education facet. According to Raitskaya and Tikhonova, obtaining competency in the second and additional languages has developed into an essential component of a high-quality education.[22] They highlight a major shift in approaches to multilingual learning, emphasizing the growing importance of embracing multilingualism in education. The statement offered is evidence that multilingual education is essential. This implies that the integration of multilingual practices in education plays a crucial role in developing students' cultural awareness and fostering an understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures.[23]

Furthermore, involving multiple languages in the educational setting not only adds quality and richness to the academic experience but also gives a touch-up to the overall quality of education. In addition, multilingualism is associated with increased cognitive flexibility and creativity. Therefore, incorporating multiple languages into the educational curriculum can lead to creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Lastly, unmasking multilingualism in education settings and use of multiple languages not only prepares individuals to readjust more effectively to different societal settings but also

[15] Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai, and Martha Qorro, *Focus on Fresh Data on the Language of Instruction Debate in Tanzania and South Africa* (African Minds, 2006).
[16] Desai, Qorro, and Brock-Utne, *Educational Challenges in Multilingual Societies: LOITASA Phase Two Research*, 208.
[17] Desai, Qorro, and Brock-Utne, *Educational Challenges in Multilingual Societies: LOITASA Phase Two Research*, 207.
[18] B. Brock-Utne et al., *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa – Highlights from a Project* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010), 208.
[19] L. Raitskaya and E. Tikhonova, "Multilingualism and Beyond: Implications for Education," *Journal of Language and Education* 9, no. 2 (34) (2023): 5–11.
[20] Benard Odoyo Okal, "Benefits of Multilingualism in Education.," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 2, no. 3 (2014): 223–29.
[21] Osuji Gregory Ekene and Everlyn Oluoch-Suleh, "Implications of Multilingual Education on Teaching and Learning in Culturally Diverse High Schools in Africa," 2019.
[22] Raitskaya and Tikhonova, "Multilingualism and Beyond: Implications for Education."
[23] Raitskaya and Tikhonova, "Multilingualism and Beyond: Implications for Education"; Okal, "Benefits of Multilingualism in Education."

promotes social integration and intercultural competence, fosters the growth of appreciation for local languages, preserves linguistic diversity and recognizes the value of languages within a community.

An Overview of African Multilingualism in Literature

The elaborate intertwining of African multilingualism within literature put up a compelling journey into the various forms of linguistic environments of the continent. Makalela's study measured the effectiveness of translanguaging as a teachable strategy in complex African multilingual classrooms.[24] The study findings reveal an increased blending of transcultural identities and flexible communication skills that go beyond conventional language norms.[25] Also, Liddicoata & Taylor-Leech, worked on multilingual education: the role of language ideologies and attitudes.[26] The study investigates topics pertaining to the effect of ideologies and attitudes in the context of multilingual education. They claim that opinions and dispositions are incorporated elements of the language planning process that can influence the possibility of multilingualism in educational programs in modified ways.

Besides the findings above, around 2,100 languages, constituting 30% of the world's total, are spoken in Africa, marking multilingualism as a defining feature of the continent Lewis as cited in Heugh.[27] For example, the results from Mbirimi-Hungwe's study suggest that utilizing a translingual pattern is more beneficial for multilingual students in understanding academic concepts compared to using the code-switching method.[28] Furthermore, the research highlights the students' wish for recognition and incorporation of their multilingual skills in their academic endeavors. Moreover, Heugh reveals that in Africa, people come about multilingual abilities through informal channels and formal education, encompassing diverse communities and regions. Multilingual competencies advance horizontally across different linguistic systems (language continua) and vertically as individuals simultaneously learn multiple languages in educational environments.[29] According to Alessia, the view expressed is that the significance of multilingual communication is growing due to increased interconnectedness, especially in countries like the United States, which have historically accommodated a diverse array of languages and cultures.[30] Despite the findings of Mbirimi-Hungwe and Heugh on the benefits of multilingualism, there is the notion that even with recognition of the multilingualism within their populations, states commonly establish the English language as the standard academic medium (Ndlhovu and Makalela.[31]

Challenges in Multilingual Education: Adopting Translanguaging for Solution

In the intricate landscape of multilingualism, various challenges arise, necessitating a thoughtful exploration of effective strategies, such as translanguaging pedagogy to overcome them. For instance, Nyimbili and Sani observe that the utilization of translanguaging methods for teaching literacy in a grade 1 multilingual class posed difficulties.[32] They explain that these challenges encompassed disparities between the language of instruction and the languages predominantly spoken by students in the classroom, the rigidity of the language policy grounded in monolingualism, assessments concentrated solely on skills in the regional language using strict monolingual approaches, and a lack of adequate teaching and learning materials that would endorse monolingual language learning.

---

[24] Leketi Makalela, "Moving out of Linguistic Boxes: The Effects of Translanguaging Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms," *Language and Education* 29, no. 3 (May 4, 2015): 200–217, https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2014.994524.

[25] Makalela, "Moving out of Linguistic Boxes: The Effects of Translanguaging Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms," May 4, 2015.

[26] Anthony J Liddicoat and Kerry Taylor-Leech, "Multilingual Education: The Role of Language Ideologies and Attitudes," *Current Issues in Language Planning* (Taylor & Francis, 2015).

[27] M. P. Lewis, "Table 1. Distribution of Languages by Area of Origin. Part of the Ethnologue," SIL International, 2009, http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=area; K. A. Heugh, *Multilingual Education in Africa. The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics*, ed. Carol A. Chapelle (Blackwell Publishing Ltd. , 2013).

[28] Vimbai Mbirimi-Hungwe, "Promoting Multilingualism through Translanguaging in South African Classrooms," *Journal for Language Teaching* 57, no. 1 (2023), 1.

[29] Kathleen Heugh, "Multilingual Education Policy in South Africa Constrained by Theoretical and Historical Disconnections," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 33 (2013): 215–37.

[30] Alessia Barbici-Wagner, "Translanguaging in World Language Higher Education" (The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2023).

[31] Mbirimi-Hungwe, "Promoting Multilingualism through Translanguaging in South African Classrooms"; Heugh, "Multilingual Education Policy in South Africa Constrained by Theoretical and Historical Disconnections;" Finex Ndhlovu and Leketi Makalela, *Decolonising Multilingualism in Africa: Recentering Silenced Voices from the Global South*, vol. 26 (Multilingual Matters, 2021).

[32] Friday Nyimbili and David Sani Mwanza, "Translanguaging Challenges Faced by Teachers and Learners in First Grade Multilingual Literacy Classrooms in Zambia.," *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* 9, no. 3 (2021): 20–31.

Moreover, Ticheloven et al. highlight that teachers commonly face a range of challenges in linguistically diverse classrooms.[33] In particular, situations, where students speak languages unfamiliar to teachers, prompt questions and can pose dilemmas concerning language policy within the classroom. In addition, Nyimbili and Sani submit that another challenging situation that teachers and learners face in the execution of multilingual policy is the sociolinguistic background for language development, which does not favour multilingual advancement.[34] Therefore, there is a need for policy direction to meet the changing requirements of contemporary classrooms.[35]

Africa's educational sectors are rich in linguistic diversity, yet the intricate interplay of multiple languages within these settings is not explored sufficiently. This omission restricts understanding of the dynamics of multilingual literacy within the continents. A critical gap exists in the form of a holistic cross-case analysis that investigates how different linguistic backgrounds and the growth of effective multilingual educational strategies lead to success stories in African contexts. Hence, this study will fill the gap by engaging in a study like this to expand the success stories of the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape's Project with the view of shedding more light on the wide margins of the implications for multilingual literacy initiatives. The choice of these two nations is based on the fact that the researchers have a rich experience of multilingualism in Nigeria and South Africa and will be able to have easy access to the intended study participants.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a survey methodology, focusing on two African countries that have implemented multilingualism in educational settings. Adopting a predominantly qualitative approach, the study used purposive sampling to select these nations. The analysis of success stories included the investigation of the objectives, strategies, and outcomes of the projects, a qualitative examination of archival materials, and scholarly articles associated with the projects.

In general, reports on these two projects were purposively examined by scholars who were participants in these projects. The use of a purposive sampling technique for the selection of these reports aimed to include different perspectives and insights from individuals with direct involvement in the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape LOITASA's Project. The findings were then presented in a descriptive narrative format.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape LOITASA's Project stand as important initiatives in the incorporation of multilingualism in educational settings in Africa. These projects, with their unique objectives, strategies, and outcomes, have stacked up attention in academic debate, suggesting a profound analysis of their outcomes and lessons.

Objectives and Strategies

Excavating into the specific objectives and strategies implemented in each project, we find that both projects had look-alike objectives of straightening out better literacy and educational outcomes but they used distinct strategies to get through these objectives. The Ife project focused on formulating a literacy curriculum that has a connection with the local context, and it also employed strategies to improve the quality of teaching by using the mother tongue. In contrast, the Western Cape LOITASA project focused on using previously existing materials and resources, and it also applied strategies to advance the learning environment. Apart from that, in South Africa, the experimental project involved a running lengthwise study from Grades 4 to 6 at two schools in the Western Cape, where one class of the selected schools was

[33] Anouk Ticheloven et al., "Translanguaging Challenges in Multilingual Classrooms: Scholar, Teacher and Student Perspectives," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 18, no. 3 (2021): 491–514.

[34] Nyimbili and Mwanza, "Translanguaging Challenges Faced by Teachers and Learners in First Grade Multilingual Literacy Classrooms in Zambia," 29.

[35] David Sani Mwanza, "In Search of High Literacy Levels in Zambian Primary Schools: Does Duration of Mother Tongue Instruction before Transitioning into a Second Language Matter?," 2020; David Sani Mwanza and Vigirio Bwalya, "Democratisation or Symbolic Violence? An Analysis of Teachers' Language Practices in Selected Multilingual Classrooms in Chibombo District, Zambia.," 2019.

being taught Science and Geography in isiXhosa and the other in English, the dominant mode of instruction in school settings.[36]

In addition, in the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project, the primary objective was to encourage linguistic diversity in educational settings. Afolayan and Falola explain that "the children's mother tongue was used as the main medium of instruction in the first three years of primary school" of the project before introducing the English language.[37] Hence, the goal of the 1970 Nigeria and the Western Cape LOITASA projects goal was to promote the use of the home language(s) as a medium of instruction. The projects systematically enforced a curriculum that embraced multiple languages, with the aim of enhancing cultural inclusivity and educational accessibility.[38] Furthermore, the Western Cape LOITASA's Project, aimed to address linguistic inequalities by using innovative language policies. [39] These projects strategically incorporated multilingualism into the programme by recognising the importance of linguistic diversity in education settings.

Outcomes and Impact

The outcome of the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project demonstrated a positive impact on students' language acquisition and cultural awareness but there are challenges such as teacher preparedness and resource allocation were identified as areas that need more attention.[40] Similarly, the Western Cape LOITASA Project showed known improvements in linguistic inclusivity.[41] It can be inferred that the project's result outstretched beyond the classroom, it brings about a broader societal understanding of linguistic diversity and cultural understanding.

Teaching Methods Employed in the Projects

According to some scholars, the Western Cape LOITASA project used different teaching methods such as mother tongue instruction, transitional bilingual and additive bilingual education.[42] The isiXhosa language was used as a medium of instruction for isiXhosa-speaking students.[43] Mother tongue as a medium of instruction allows students to be taught in their home language. Transitional bilingual education uses the students' home language for teaching for a limited period before learning a second language while additive bilingual education aims at adding a second language without losing the first language. On the other hand, Ife's 1970 project in Nigeria used an immersion method which is a type of additive bilingual education. The home language of the students was used in the early stages of education, and the English language was later gradually introduced as a second language. The progenitor of the Ife project wanted to develop proficiency in both the home language and English to promote bilingualism among the students.[44]

Challenges and Opportunities of the Projects

Brock-Utne et al. explain that one of the challenges of the Western Cape LOITASA project was the opposition from the English-speaking residential areas and the lack of qualified teachers.[45] They explain that the project increased access to education and made profitable improvements in communication between teachers and students which is a great opportunity for teaching and learning processes. One of

[36] Birgit Brock-Utne et al., *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa-Highlights from a Project*, vol. 5 (Brill, 2010).
[37] Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between*.
[38] Harley. "Is Nigeria's National Language Policy realistic?" *The Language & Culture Archives.*
[39] Brock-Utne et al., *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa-Highlights from a Project*.
[40] Fafunwa, Macualey, and Funso Sokoya, *Education in Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Research Project*; A. Bamgbose, *Language and Exclusion: The Consequences of Language Policies in Africa* (Hamburg: LIT, 2000); Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between*.
[41] Birgit Brock-Utne, "Learning through a Familiar Language versus Learning through a Foreign Language—A Look into Some Secondary School Classrooms in Tanzania," *International Journal of Educational Development* 27, no. 5 (2007): 487–98; Birgit Brock-Utne, "Language of Instruction and Student Performance: New Insights from Research in Tanzania and South Africa," *International Review of Education* 53 (2007): 509–30; Brock-Utne et al., *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa – Highlights from a Project*.
[42] Brock-Utne, Desai, and Qorro, *Focus on Fresh Data on the Language of Instruction Debate in Tanzania and South Africa*; Brock-Utne et al., *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa-Highlights from a Project*.
[43] Zubeida Desai, Martha Qorro, and Birgit Brock-Utne, *Educational Challenges in Multilingual Societies: LOITASA Phase Two Research* (African Books Collective, 2010), 1.
[44] Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between*.
[45] Brock-Utne, Desai, and Qorro, *Focus on Fresh Data on the Language of Instruction Debate in Tanzania and South Africa*.

the challenges of Ife 1970's projects was limited funding and also the need to adapt curriculum materials to the Yoruba language while one of the opportunities is that it provided scaffolding for the Yoruba language to be used in literature, journalism, and radio programmes. According to Falola and Afolayan, Ife 1970's project faced four basic challenges of provision of an adequate syllabus; the availability of adequate textbooks; the supply of adequate teachers, and experimental and technical difficulties.[46] They were able to overcome these challenges because of the support of other people, for example, the Institute of African Studies offered help by creating Yoruba Language Instruction to train the teachers who will be involved in the implementation stage of the project. A syllabus was designed titled "Suggested Syllabus for Yoruba". It was unfortunate that the project did not go beyond the initial stage of the experimentation because it never experienced the implementation stage but never a waste since some of the pupils who participated in the project are now among the finest professionals at this moment.[47]

Valuable Lessons and Recommendations for Future Multilingual Literacy Initiatives

Brock-Utne et al. highlight that valuable lessons that can be learned from the Western Cape LOITASA project include strong leadership impact on policy implementation, community engagement, and a flexible approach to curriculum design.[48] Bamgbose explains that there is a need for political support, and collaboration with local communities if any policy will work effectively. [49] Furthermore, the importance of local languages in education is a valuable lesson that can also be seen. The use of local language in education has a positive impact on educational outcomes and it serves as a powerful tool to preserve and promote cultural heritage. Bamgbose makes the recommendation that there should be flexibility in curriculum design and there is a necessity to adapt the curriculum to the local context and incorporate the knowledge and skills of local teachers. In addition, he explains that teaching methods and materials should be flexible. Brock-Utne et al. also make recommendations that there should be transitional bilingual education that will introduce students to a second language while maintaining instruction in the first language.[50] They stress the participation of parents and local communities in the planning and implementation of multilingual literacy programs.

Furthermore, Falola and Afolayan highlight that various scholars have produced textbooks using their mother tongue in science subjects and mathematics to support mother tongue education (MTE) and this came up as a result of Ife 1970's Six Year Primary project (SYPP).[51]

Similarities and Differences between the Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape LOITASA's Project

Observing the two projects from these two nations with different linguistic diversities reveals that both projects have the main purpose of improving literacy and educational outcomes for the students with the use of their mother tongues and both projects used local languages as part of their approach. In addition, the problem of lack of funds and qualified teachers to teach the indigenous language in both projects must also be mentioned. Furthermore, there is also an emphasis on the importance of strong leadership and community involvement. Regarding the issue of differences, the Western Cape project took place in an urban setting while the Ife 1970 project took place in a rural area. In terms of curriculum design, the Ife Project followed a process of action to adapt and adjust its approach based on the needs of the students and teachers while the Western Cape LOITASA's project followed a more traditional approach to curriculum design. It relied on existing materials and resources rather than adapting them to the local context. More so, the Western Cape LOITASA project was primarily focused on improving literacy in the students' first language while the Ife 1970 project also had a strong focus on introducing students to English as a second language in the later years of learning after they were first taught in their mother tongue. Another difference is that the Ife project was designed in close collaboration with the local

[46] Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between*.
[47] Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between,* 153.
[48] Brock-Utne, Desai, and Qorro, *Focus on Fresh Data on the Language of Instruction Debate in Tanzania and South Africa*.
[49] Bamgbose, *Language and Exclusion: The Consequences of Language Policies in Africa*.
[50] Brock-Utne, Desai, and Qorro, *Focus on Fresh Data on the Language of Instruction Debate in Tanzania and South Africa*.
[51] Afolayan and Falola, *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between,* 154..

community and the project organizers worked to build trust and respect with the community. In contrast, the Western Cape's project did not have a strong community-based approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the success stories of the Ife project and the Western Cape project, the study recommends that literacy initiatives should always consider a flexible and community-based approach because the approach can help to ensure that the programs are adapted to the specific needs of students and communities. In addition, multilingual programs should be designed to promote both literacy in the student's first language and the acquisition of a second language because the approach will help ensure that students have the literacy skills they need to succeed at school and beyond school environments. It is recommended that there should be the integration of translanguaging in a literary education programme because it will help to understand the cultural and linguistic dynamics that can shape literacy in multilingual and multicultural landscapes.

CONCLUSION

The Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the Western Cape's Project have lined up instrumental roles in advancing the cause of multilingualism in educational settings. Despite the challenges recorded by the progenitors, these projects have raised the possibility of encouraging linguistic diversity and cultural inclusivity. Also, the Ife project's success shows that community engagement and an adjustable approach to curriculum map out can be of great importance to the success of this project while the Western Cape project's success shows that even without a strong community-based approach, multilingual literacy programme can still be capable of producing positive results. Besides, these two projects show that there is no uniform solution to improving educational outcomes through multilingual education. Besides, future study contributions should draw upon the lessons learned from these projects to further increase the effectiveness of multilingual education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adegbija, E. " Language Planning and Education in Africa Countries." In *Language of Instruction in African Education*, edited by M. Brock-Utne, 53–76. Ibadan, Nigeria., 2004.

Afolayan, M. O., and T. Falola. *Adebisi Afolayan: The Celebration of Living Legend – His Life, Works and Everything in-Between*. Pan-African University Press., 2024.

Akinwamide, Timothy Kolade. "The Influence of Process Approach on English as Second Language Students' Performances in Essay Writing." *English Language Teaching* 5, no. 3 (2012): 16–29.

Bamgbose, A. *Language and Exclusion: The Consequences of Language Policies in Africa*. Hamburg: LIT, 2000.

Barbici-Wagner, Alessia. "Translanguaging in World Language Higher Education." The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2023.

Brock-Utne, B., Z. Desai, M. Qorro, and A. Pitman. *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa – Highlights from a Project*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010.

Brock-Utne, Birgit. "Language of Instruction and Student Performance: New Insights from Research in Tanzania and South Africa." *International Review of Education* 53 (2007): 509–30.

———. "Learning through a Familiar Language versus Learning through a Foreign Language—A Look into Some Secondary School Classrooms in Tanzania." *International Journal of Educational Development* 27, no. 5 (2007): 487–98.

Brock-Utne, Birgit, Zubeida Desai, and Martha Qorro. *Focus on Fresh Data on the Language of Instruction Debate in Tanzania and South Africa*. African Minds, 2006.

Brock-Utne, Birgit, Zubeida Desai, Martha A S Qorro, and Allan Pitman. *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa-Highlights from a Project*. Vol. 5. Brill, 2010.

Brutt-Griffler, J. *World English: A Study of Its Development*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2002.

Clyne, M. "Multilingualism." In *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, edited by F. Coulmas, 301–14. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.

Creese, A. *Multilingualism and Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Creese, A., and A. Blackledge. *Multilingualism: A Critical Perspectives*. New York: Continum, 2010.
Desai, Zubeida, Martha Qorro, and Birgit Brock-Utne. *Educational Challenges in Multilingual Societies: LOITASA Phase Two Research*. African Books Collective, 2010.
Ekene, Osuji Gregory, and Everlyn Oluoch-Suleh. "Implications of Multilingual Education on Teaching and Learning in Culturally Diverse High Schools in Africa," 2019.
Fafunwa, A. B., J. I. Macualey, and J. A. Funso Sokoya. *Education in Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Research Project*. Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1989.
Garcia, O. *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
Harley, M. Is Nigeria's National Language Policy realistic? The Language & Culture Archives. (2021).Retrieved on March 4, 2024, https://www.sil.org/domain/literacy-and-education
Heugh, K. A. *Multilingual Education in Africa. The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics*. Edited by Carol A. Chapelle. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. , 2013.
Heugh, Kathleen. "Multilingual Education Policy in South Africa Constrained by Theoretical and Historical Disconnections." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 33 (2013): 215–37.
Kalan, Amir. *Who's Afraid of Multilingual Education?: Conversations with Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Jim Cummins, Ajit Mohanty and Stephen Bahry about the Iranian Context and Beyond*. Vol. 15. Multilingual Matters, 2016.
Lewis, M. P. "Table 1. Distribution of Languages by Area of Origin. Part of the Ethnologue." SIL International, 2009. http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=area.
Liddicoat, Anthony J, and Kerry Taylor-Leech. "Multilingual Education: The Role of Language Ideologies and Attitudes." *Current Issues in Language Planning*. Taylor & Francis, 2015.
Loomi, C. "Global Perspectives on Multilingualism." *Comparative Education Review* 56, no. 2 (May 12, 2012): 333–35. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259711338.
Makalela, Leketi. "Community Elders' Narrative Accounts of Ubuntu Translanguaging: Learning and Teaching in African Education." *International Review of Education* 64, no. 6 (December 1, 2018): 823–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-018-9752-8.
———. "Moving out of Linguistic Boxes: The Effects of Translanguaging Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms." *Language and Education* 29, no. 3 (May 4, 2015): 200–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2014.994524.
———. "Moving out of Linguistic Boxes: The Effects of Translanguaging Strategies for Multilingual Classrooms." In *Language in Epistemic Access*, 24–41. Routledge, 2018.
———. "Translanguaging as a Vehicle for Epistemic Access: Cases for Reading Comprehension and Multilingual Interactions." *Per Linguam* 31, no. 1 (May 22, 2015): 15. https://doi.org/10.5785/31-1-628.
Makalela, Leketi, and Kleber Aparecido da Silva. "Translanguaging and Language Policy in the Global South: Introductory Notes." *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada* 23, no. 1 (2023): e33203.
Mbirimi-Hungwe, Vimbai. "Promoting Multilingualism through Translanguaging in South African Classrooms." *Journal for Language Teaching* 57, no. 1 (2023).
Mwanza, David Sani. "In Search of High Literacy Levels in Zambian Primary Schools: Does Duration of Mother Tongue Instruction before Transitioning into a Second Language Matter?," 2020.
Mwanza, David Sani, and Vigirio Bwalya. "Democratisation or Symbolic Violence? An Analysis of Teachers' Language Practices in Selected Multilingual Classrooms in Chibombo District, Zambia.," 2019.
Ndhlovu, Finex, and Leketi Makalela. *Decolonising Multilingualism in Africa: Recentering Silenced Voices from the Global South*. Vol. 26. Multilingual Matters, 2021.
Nyimbili, Friday, and David Sani Mwanza. "Translanguaging Challenges Faced by Teachers and Learners in First Grade Multilingual Literacy Classrooms in Zambia." *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* 9, no. 3 (2021): 20–31.
Okal, Benard Odoyo. "Benefits of Multilingualism in Education." *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 2, no. 3 (2014): 223–29.
Raitskaya, L., and E. Tikhonova. "Multilingualism and Beyond: Implications for Education." *Journal of Language and Education* 9, no. 2 (34) (2023): 5–11.

Ticheloven, Anouk, Elma Blom, Paul Leseman, and Sarah McMonagle. "Translanguaging Challenges in Multilingual Classrooms: Scholar, Teacher and Student Perspectives." *International Journal of Multilingualism* 18, no. 3 (2021): 491–514.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Modupe Grace Aroge, PhD (Obafemi Awolowo University, 2019), is a leading researcher in language, education, and discourse analysis. As a postdoctoral fellow at Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, she continues to advance her expertise. Dr. Aroge's affiliations with prominent academic associations and extensive publications in local and international journals have solidified her reputation as a specialist in Discourse analysis, Multimodal discourse, Multilingual literacy, Conversation analysis, and English language classroom interaction.Her scholarly contributions foster critical discourse, intellectual exchange, and community engagement.

Professor Leketi Makalela is a renowned scholar and educator, serving as Deputy Head of School: Research at Wits School of Education and Founding Director of the Hub for Multilingual Education and Literacies (HUMEL). He is a leading expert in translanguaging, multilingual education, language policy, and literacy development. He has published in internationally accredited journals such as World Englishes, Written Communication, and International Journal of Multilingual Research. He is also a Distinguished Visiting Professor at City University of New York and a National Research Foundation SARCHI holder in Multilingual Education for Social Inclusion and Access.

Dr. Peter Oluwaseun Merisi is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Education. He previously taught at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban University of Technology, and North-West University. Dr. Merisi's research focuses on academic literacy, multilingualism, and teacher education, with publications in reputable journals. He currently coordinates the Bachelor of Honours Degree Programme in English Education Unit of Wits School of Education.