

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND COLLECTION OF DATA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to find out whether counsellors should use figurative language or literal language when they educate members of the public about HIV/AIDS. This study is both a quantitative (the use of questionnaires) and a qualitative one (the use of interviews and focus group discussions). In the first method, the researcher counts the frequency of responses given in the questionnaire. This implies representing data in terms of numbers. In the second, the responses of subjects during the interviews and focus group discussions confirm the authenticity of responses in the questionnaire. The researcher opted to draw on a combination of two approaches so that they could complement each other to provide reliable results. This chapter describes subjects and presents data collection procedures and methods of analysis.

3.2 SAMPLING

The research involved undertaking fieldwork study to interact with subjects. Five hundred (500) subjects between 15 and 29 years of age were used in this investigation. Research in the UN AIDS Programme indicates that in many countries 60 percent of all the new infections are among those falling within this age group and that the majority of adolescents are sexually active. This clearly shows that the victims are the youth who are expected to form the core of our economy in the future.

The researcher first attended workshops conducted by AIDS counsellors of the Department of Health and Welfare at places of public gathering in the Northern Province, particularly in the Central and Southern Regions. Data was gathered from those who had the opportunity to attend or listen to workshops. The research, as indicated, was conducted at public gatherings such as clinics, schools and other institutions of learning belonging to the Central and Southern Regions of the Northern Province. The researcher chose these regions because unlike others, they are the only regions wherein no any other language but Sepedi is spoken as a home language. Besides, AIDS counsellors visit them on a regular basis. The nature of questions asked evolve around whether the subjects had difficulty in understanding AIDS publications, presentations and workshops. Although all the questions were asked mainly in English, there was a provision for Sepedi explanations and examples when the need arose.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURES

The subjects were divided into two groups, each exposed to a different exercise. The first group comprised four hundred (400) subjects who were asked to complete questionnaires if they had the chance to attend or listen to a presentation. To ensure a fair and equal distribution of responses, forty (40) questionnaires were distributed to the subjects at every workshop the researcher attended. The results of the questionnaire are therefore based on ten (10) different workshops attended by the researcher. The last group comprised one hundred (100) subjects who were interviewed and also subjected to group discussions. At each of these gatherings, ten (10) people were randomly selected to take part in both the

interviews and focus group discussions. The subjects were interviewed one after the other. After participating in the interview, the same subjects were grouped together and asked to:

- a) listen to a tape-recorded cassette on which an AIDS counsellor was recorded while counselling the youth about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. After listening to the tapes, discussions resumed whereby the researcher wanted to find out if the subjects really understood the message. The objective was to furnish proof of the hypothesis that the use of figurative concepts is a considerable hindrance in the effective and efficient transmission of messages.

- b) study extracts (which are discussed later in this study) in the source language (English) and the target language (Sepedi) on AIDS and sex education campaigns, published by the National Department of Health. The subjects were asked to study these extracts first in the target language. They were told to concentrate exclusively on the type of language used. The researcher asked them a few questions to identify if there were any problems and topics not well communicated. Their source text equivalents were then provided at a later stage for comparison. This afforded the subjects an opportunity to compare the texts in both languages to check if problems encountered in the target text were likely to be encountered in the source text counterpart. The aim was to prove whether the problems of misunderstanding in either of the two languages were terminologically related. This technique not only attempts to bring to the surface major discrepancies in the two languages, but also to reveal the causes of such discrepancies.

The first three AIDS workshops that the researcher attended were not meant to obtain data but to observe and to record the proceedings which were used to assemble data. This also afforded the researcher the opportunity to engage in the activities set out to investigate. As indicated in 3.3(a) above, these recorded tapes were played before a hundred randomly selected subjects for data collection.

An integration of the following two methods was used in the collection of data:

3.3.1 Questionnaires – A questionnaire consisting of two sections was designed. The first section asked information of a general nature and the second part sought to collect data necessary to answer the questions posed by the study. In all instances, the researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaires. The benefits of this approach, as expressed by Babbie, are that

the appearance of a research worker, either delivering the questionnaire, picking it up, or both, seems to produce a higher completion rate than is normally true for straightforward mail surveys (1973:163)

He explained the instructions and emphasised the respondents' freedom to ask questions if they did not understand any particular question on the questionnaire. No time limit was given. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a transmittal (covering letter) which, among other things, explained the purpose of the research, urged the subjects to respond to all the items as accurately and truthfully as possible, assured their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information given and indicated that completing the questionnaire was not compulsory. (see Appendix B)

3.3.2 Interviews and focus group discussions – A more reliable, accurate and supplementary technique in the form of interviews and focus group discussions was also used to gather information. As a follow up to the responses given in the questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with subjects to cross-check if the information provided in the questionnaire was genuine. In other words, this was made to establish whether the data obtained from the questionnaire correlated with that of the interviews and focus group discussions. In all instances, the subjects' verbal responses were tape-recorded using a standard micro-cassette recorder. These audio-tapes were then transcribed. These transcripts were finally subjected to analysis.

The employment of these two complementary methods is justifiable because it enables the researcher to discover if there are discrepancies in both cases. Previous research revealed that data gathered exclusively by means of questionnaires is often unreliable because the subjects prefer to write what they think the researcher wants rather than what they feel is true. It was expected that the answers given in both instances would enable the researcher to draw conclusions on what he intends to investigate.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The results of the above-mentioned questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions are analysed and interpreted in the next chapter. The hypothesis remains that

communicative translation would address the problem of poor communication as experienced by AIDS campaigners and the populace. The analysis tests this hypothesis.