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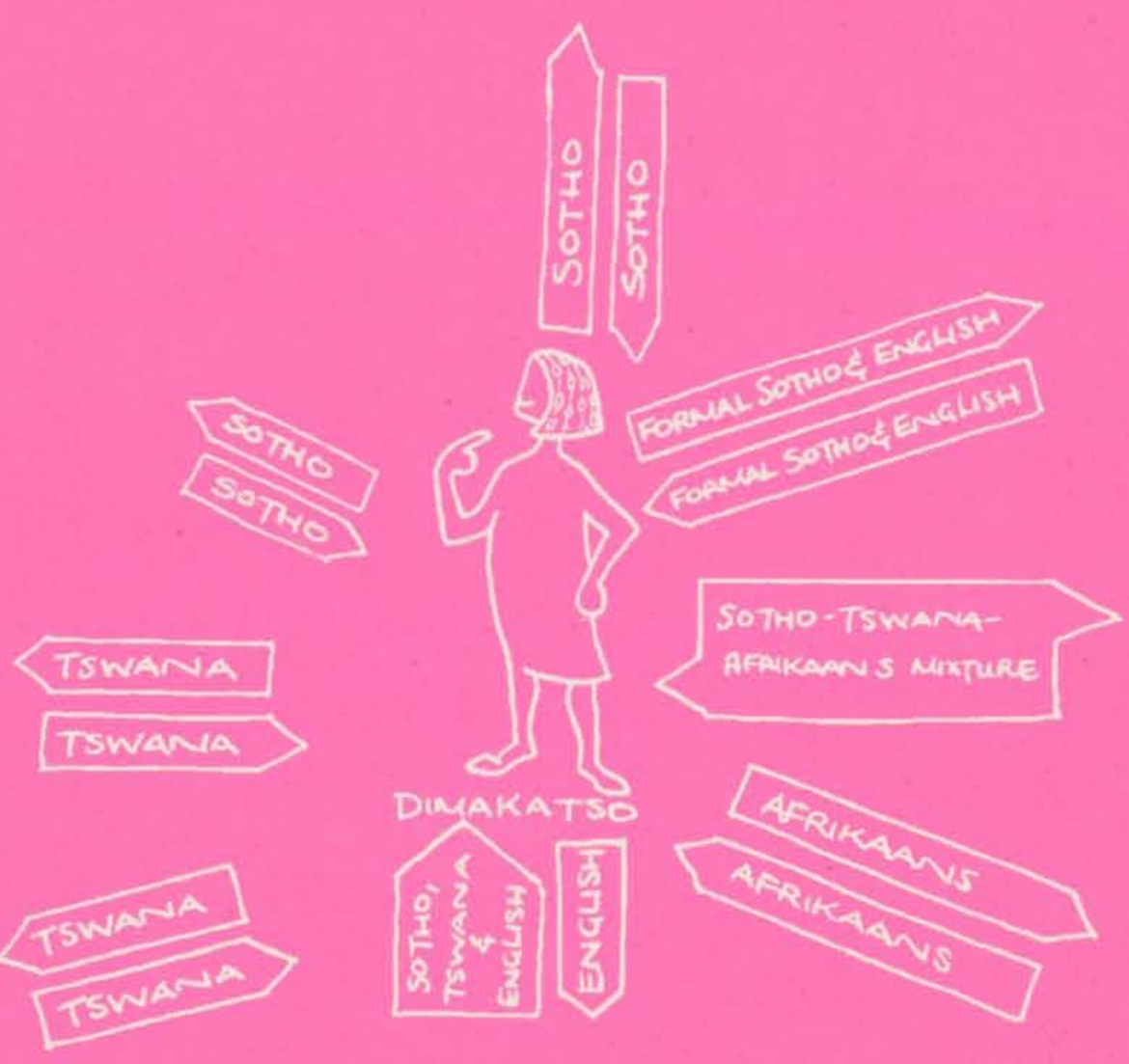
CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS SERIES
Edited by Hilary Janks

Languages in South Africa



Janet Orlek

Materials for the Classroom

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Janet Orlek

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FOREWORD

This workbook explores how different languages (eg Xhosa, Afrikaans, English) give power to different people in different situations (e.g. at home, in the classroom, in the school yard, in taxis etc). For example, a Tswana speaking girl may speak to her friend in English so that her grandmother cannot understand what they're talking about. A Zulu speaker may choose to use Sotho on the trains so that he is not taken as an ANC supporter or as an Inkatha supporter. A truck driver may speak Afrikaans to a traffic inspector in the hope that the traffic inspector will reduce his traffic fine. Nelson Mandela chose to speak to school pupils in English at his first welcome home rally in Soweto in 1990.

Most people in South Africa speak more than two languages. In this workbook you will explore some of the advantages and disadvantages experienced by people who speak many languages, as well as some of the advantages and disadvantages experienced by people who speak only one language. You will discuss what makes people use particular languages in particular situations. Why people switch from one language to another, why some people are able to choose which language to use and why some people have no choice over which language to use.

In order to understand why people have different power in different situations, according to the language they speak, it is necessary to look at the history of different language groups. You will look at the history of English and Afrikaans, two languages which have come to hold a lot of power for people who speak them and over people who do not speak them. You will also be asked to think about the power that African languages have in people's lives and how the power of African languages has been affected by the power of English and Afrikaans.

Finally, you will look at how language has been used to divide people under apartheid and begin to think about ways that language can be used to give more people more power over different aspects of their lives. You will also think about how language policy can help to develop and support democracy in a new South Africa.

In talking about these issues, you are likely to find yourselves expressing strong feelings and attitudes about your language, your culture and about other languages and language groups. Talking about language has the potential to cause conflict. I hope that in talking about the issues in this book you will come to understand where these strong feelings come from and why language has caused conflict in South Africa. I suggest that you agree on some ground rules for talking to one another about these issues and that you all try to use your discussions to break down some of the barriers between different language speakers. I hope that your discussions based on this workbook will enable you to begin to build bridges among yourselves as South Africans.

Janet Orlek

CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS (CLA)

This workbook is part of a series called *Critical Language Awareness*. All the workbooks in the series deal with **the relationship between language and power**. This relationship is not obvious and so the materials attempt to raise awareness of the way in which language **can** be used and **is** used to maintain and to challenge existing forms of power. There can be little doubt that power matters, both to people who have it and to those who do not. This series will try to show that because there are connections between language and power, language also matters.

In any **unequal relation of power** there are top dogs and underdogs. How people get to be on top in a society has to do with what that society values. It may be age or maleness or class or cleverness or a white skin. It is easier for those who have power to maintain it if they can persuade everyone in the society that there is nothing unnatural about these arrangements, that things are this way because that is the way they are meant to be.

If people **consent** to being powerless then the people in power need to use less **force** (armies, police, punishments) to maintain their power. Convincing and persuading people to consent to society's rules is often the job of families, religions, schools and the media. All these social institutions use language and it is largely in and through language that meaning is mobilised to defend the status quo.

But **language is also used to challenge the status quo**. By refusing to consent and by working together people can bring about change. What makes CLA 'critical' is its concern with the politics of meaning: the ways in which dominant meanings are maintained, challenged and changed.

When people use language to speak or write, they have to make many choices. They have to decide what words to use, whether to include adjectives and adverbs, whether to use the present, the past or the future, whether to use sexist or non-sexist pronouns, whether to join sentences or to leave them separate, how to sequence information, whether to be definite or tentative, approving or disapproving. What all these choices mean is that written and spoken **texts are constructed from a range of possible language options**.

However, not all the options are linguistic – many **texts are a combination of verbal and non-verbal elements**. Students are asked to think about the non-verbal choices such as photographs, pictures, gestures, graphs, which affect the meaning of texts.

Many of the choices are **social choices**. Every society has conventions which govern people's behaviour, including their language behaviour. There are social rules controlling who should speak, for how long, when and where, and in which language. There are social norms for polite and impolite forms of speech; there are taboo words and topics. These unwritten **rules of use** govern what a speech community considers **appropriate** language behaviour.

These **social norms are a good indication of power relations** as many of them reflect the values of the people or groups in society who have power. This is particularly true when different groups do not have equal language rights. Here is an obvious example. Where teachers have more power than their students, they can call their students what they like. They can use first names or surnames only, or even insulting names that they have made up. Students, however, have to call teachers by their surnames and a title such as Mr or Ms; some students even have to call their teachers 'Sir' or 'Mistress'.

We forget that these rules of use are **social conventions** – they start to look natural and to seem like common sense. We forget that they are human constructions. It is easier to remember this when we compare the rules of different speech communities. Some groups think that it is rude to look a person in the eye when you speak to them. Other groups believe the opposite. Neither is more natural than the other. Both are conventions.

Critical Language Awareness emphasises the fact that texts are constructed. Anything that has been constructed can be **de-constructed**. This unmaking or unpicking of the text increases our awareness of the choices that the writer or speaker has made. Every choice foregrounds what was selected and hides, silences or backgrounds what was not selected. Awareness of this prepares the way to ask **critical questions**: Why did the writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language used? We hope that students will also ask these critical questions about the workbooks in the series.

What the series hopes to do is to teach students how to become **critical readers**. Critical readers resist the power of print and do not believe everything they read. They start from a position of strategic doubt and weigh texts against their own ideas and values as well as those of others. This is not opposition for opposition's sake. If CLA enables people to use their awareness to contest the practices which disempower them, and to use language so as not to disempower others, then it can contribute to the struggle for human emancipation.

Hilary Janks

SUGGESTED METHODS FOR TEACHERS

I believe that students learn by talking and writing about new ideas. Often they do not know what they know until they have tried to put their ideas into words. In large classes it is impossible for everyone to talk to the teacher, and students often benefit from telling a friend their feelings and ideas. The friend gives them feedback that enables them to revise and change their opinions before committing themselves to a final answer.

1. To achieve this students need opportunities to:
   Work in pairs with the person next to them. Pair work is easy to organise and it makes everyone in the class speak to some other student.

   Work in groups (from 3 to 5 students).
   The teacher can give groups the same task or different tasks. For example if the students are working on an exercise, different groups can be asked to do different questions or all the groups can be asked to do the same questions. The teacher should keep track of what the groups are doing by
   - moving from group to group to listen to the discussion
   - seeing that all group members contribute
   - asking each group to make notes and sometimes to hand in written answers.

2. **Groups and pairs should report back to the whole class.** If the groups did different questions, they have the responsibility of explaining their answers to the rest of the class so that ideas can be pooled. If they did the same questions, not all groups need report back in order to compare their answers.

3. **Teachers should try to establish a spirit of co-operation rather than competition.** Students should be encouraged to help each other and to share what they know.

4. **Students should be encouraged to listen to one another,** especially during report backs. They should decide whether or not they agree with what the other person is saying. They should also be taught to make notes when their fellow students are speaking.

5. **It is a good idea to allow students to work in their mother tongue** to give them an opportunity at the start of the group work to understand the ideas. Because group work is followed by some spoken or written presentation in the medium of instruction, what is important is that by the end of the group work students are able to express their ideas in the language of the classroom.

6. **Students should also do individual work at school and at home.** This gives them practice in using the medium of instruction and encourages independence.

7. **Both group and individual work should sometimes be written.** In large classes it is not always possible to read everything that students write. Teachers should check students' books regularly to see that they are doing the work and that they understand the lessons. Some exercises should be marked carefully. Students need teachers to respond to what they are trying to say. It is also possible to go over exercises in class and to teach students how to check their own work.

8. **Some activities can be done in less depth than the workbook suggests.** Sometimes the workbook includes more than one activity on the same idea or concept. If the students grasp the idea with the first exercise, the teacher should feel free to do the related exercises more quickly (say with a brief read through) or not at all. Different students in the class can do different exercises in more or less detail according to their needs.

9. **Some activities can be done in more depth than the workbook suggests.** If the class gets really interested in something the teacher should encourage students to find similar examples in newspapers or magazines which they can bring to class for additional discussion. Teachers and students should devise their own exercises.

10. **Teachers and students should constantly relate the issues and activities in the workbooks to their own lives and experiences.** The workbooks are only a starting point for the exploration of the language and power issues that they raise, and lessons should not simply stick to the book.

11. **Teachers should help students to apply ideas in these workbooks to all their school subjects.**

12. **Teachers can make the ideas less abstract for the students** by encouraging them to do the research, the collages and the drawings as well as the dramatisations, debates and discussions suggested.

13. **Teachers should facilitate class discussions.** The workbooks deal with real and sensitive issues. Teachers need to help students to listen to one another and to try to understand the different histories and positions that other people in the class speak from. We need to hear other people and not try to convert them to our way of thinking.

14. **It is important to vary the approach used.** Different people learn in different ways. By varying the method, the teacher gives all the students a better chance of learning in ways that suit them best.

H Janks

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



My name is Emanuel Sokhaya Mabasa. I'm from Soweto. Mabaso is my Zulu clan name – it means one who likes to make fire. Long ago – even before my grandfather's time – the Mabasa clan left the Zulu kingdom and went to the Northern Transvaal and Zimbabwe. Mabasa is now a Shangaan name. The Mabaso came back much later and rejoined the Zulu kingdom. My mother told me that I cannot marry a Khumalo, Zwane or Dhlomo because they are related to me. My mother gave me a Christian name, Emanuel, which means God is with us. She did not finish school herself and she wanted me to be well educated. I use this name at school. At family gatherings I am Sokhaya, which means first-born son. My friends call me Nkosinathi which is the Zulu version of Emanuel.

My name is Sally Ann Rosen. My surname is German – it comes from my grandfather whose surname was Rosenberg. My grandfather had to pay for this surname otherwise the Germans would have given him any name they liked. When the Germans registered the Jews, they gave people who could not pay surnames like Affenkraut (monkey) or Eselkopf (donkey's head). My grandfather chose the surname Rosenberg in memory of his mother whose name was Rose. My grandfather and his family fled from extreme racism against Jews in Germany and they came to South Africa in the 1920s. The immigration officials in Cape Town registered them as Rosen. I am named Sally after my mother's grandmother Sara and my granny still calls me Sara. My middle name Ann is the English translation of the Hebrew name Hannah, which means grace. Hannah was my father's mother who died when he was young.



Names usually hold a lot of information about people, about their family, where they come from, their gender, religion, home language and so on. Some names indicate a person's age, whether she or he has brothers or sisters and even sometimes the beliefs and values of the person's parents.

In small groups tell each other about your names – your first name/s and your family name or surname. Do you have more than one name? Do you have a nickname? Who were you named after? Do you like your name? What information do your names carry about your family, your history and perhaps your future?

If you find that you do not know much about your names, ask your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

YOU AND YOUR LANGUAGES

Some people have names in more than one language. There are many reasons for this.

A. Work out who in the class has names in more than one language.
1. Why do they have names in more than one language?
2. Which name do they like most and why?
3. Why do some people have a name in only one language?
4. Do some people need a name in more than one language? Why/why not?

Most people in South Africa are bilingual or multilingual. Bilingual people can speak two languages. Multilingual people can speak many languages.

B. Work out how many languages are spoken by people in the class. Then discuss these questions:
1. When are there advantages in being multilingual/bilingual? Which languages are the most useful for multilingual/bilingual people? Why?
2. When are there disadvantages in being multilingual?

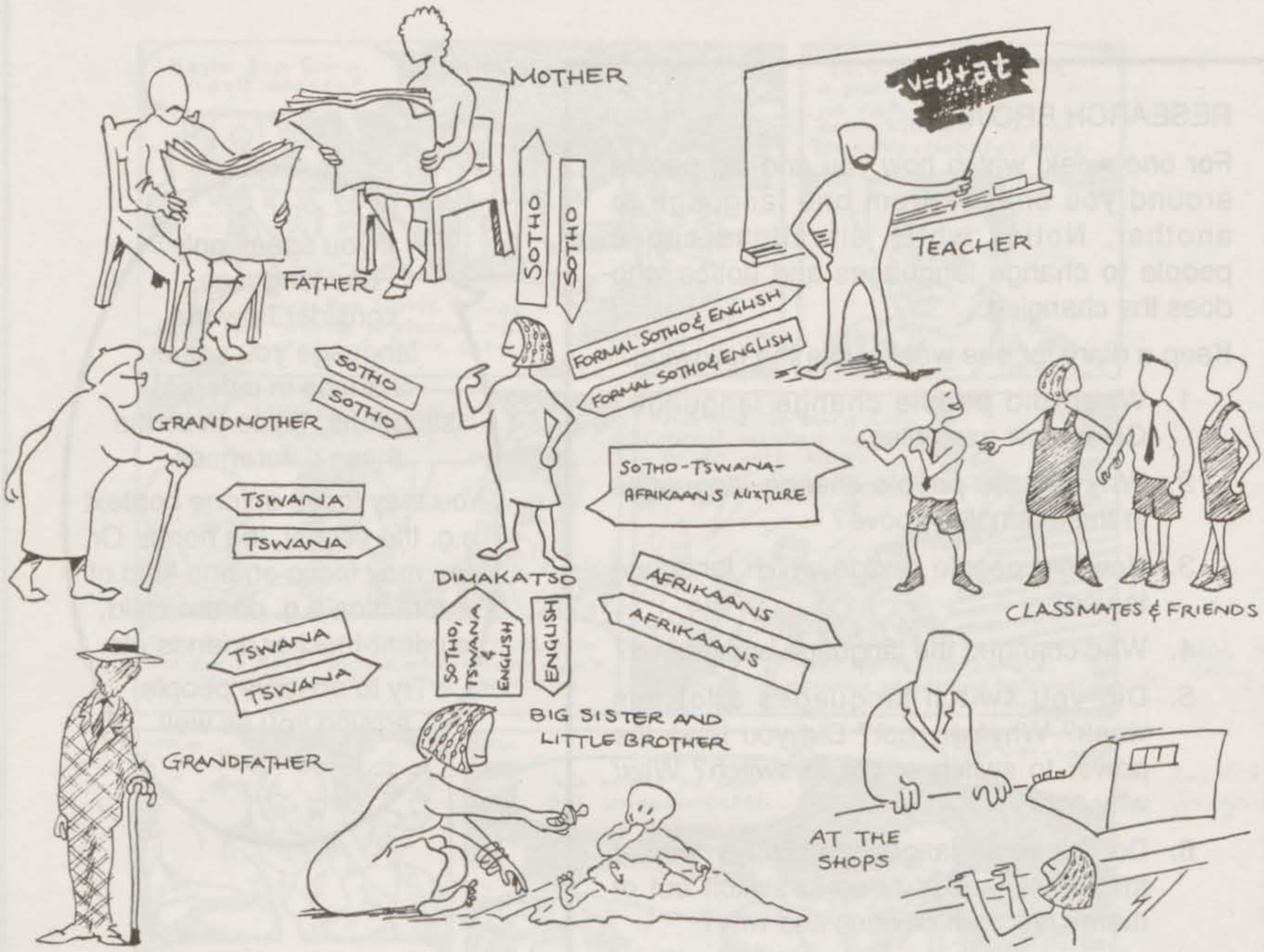
In small groups, tell each other which language/s you speak. Then discuss the following questions:
3. When do you speak which language? With whom?
4. When and why do you change from one language to another?

"Napoleon said that if you speak three languages you are like three people. I can speak three languages – Sotho, English and Tswana – but I don't feel like three people. I feel like myself. But I know what Napoleon meant – I can manage a lot more and understand a lot more about the world and I can have many different kinds of friends because I speak three languages. Sometimes I even forget which language I'm in."



DIARY OF YOU AND YOUR LANGUAGES

Below is an example of Dimakatso's language diary. She sees herself as Tswana but she grew up in a Sotho environment. She is from Phomolong near Kroonstad in the Orange Free State.



Now make your own language diary in a similar way to Dimakatso's above. Then look at your diagram and think about who or what determines which language you speak in each context. Who has the power to choose which language you speak? Give reasons.

We all use different languages in different situations. We always try to use a language which will allow us to communicate effectively in a particular situation. Sometimes we can choose which language to use and at other times the choice is made for us – by other people or by the situation. There are also times when some people cannot choose the language that would allow them to communicate most effectively in a particular situation. Can you think of some examples?

MIXING AND SWITCHING LANGUAGES

When people speak more than one language, they often switch from one to another. This is natural and often people are not aware that they are changing languages. This project aims to make you more aware of when you switch languages and why.

RESEARCH PROJECT

For one week, watch how you and the people around you change from one language to another. Notice which situations cause people to change languages and notice who does the changing.

Keep a diary for one week. Note the following:

1. When did people change language? Give a few examples.
2. Why did the people change languages in the examples above?
3. How did people decide which language to use?
4. Who changed the language being used?
5. Did you switch languages a lot this week? Why/why not? Did you have the power to switch or not to switch? Why/why not?
6. Do the same languages always 'win' in that there is less need to switch out of them? If so, which ones and why?

If you speak only one language, consider how the language you speak changes in different situations. Try to describe these differences.

You may focus on one context e.g. the school, the home. Or you may focus on one kind of interaction e.g. parent-child, student-teacher, friends etc.

Try to observe people around you as well as yourself.

After everyone has done research, tell each other, in small groups, about one incident you observed or participated in where the switching of languages was particularly interesting or surprising. Describe in detail the situation and the people involved.

Then choose one of these incidents to role play for the whole class.

After each role play, spend a few minutes analysing the switch of languages with the help of the following questions.

7. What was particularly interesting or surprising about the language switching?
8. Who switched? Why? Who decided who switched? Why?
9. Which language/s had more power in the situation? Why?

LANGUAGE MASALA

Read the page from the comic below twice. On your first reading, follow the story. On your second reading, notice how many different languages and varieties are used.



1. How many languages are used in this comic?
2. Study how language switching and mixing takes place. Based on your research, do you think the way languages in the comic are mixed and switched is realistic? Why/why not?
3. Rewrite the comic in *only one* language – choose which language to use. Now answer these questions:
   - Which language did you choose and why?
   - Compare your version of the comic with the one above. What is lost when you use only one language? What is gained when you use only one language?
   - Which version of the comic is better? Why?

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

In pairs, tell each other which language is your mother tongue or home language. If you have more than one home language, which one is more important to you? Which language do you feel more at home speaking? Explain.

For people who speak only one language at home, it is easy to say what their mother tongue is. For example, a person who speaks only Sotho at home can easily say, 'Sotho is my mother tongue' or 'I am a Sotho speaker'. People who speak more than one language at home may find it difficult to say which language is their mother tongue or to define themselves by one language – they may find it difficult to say, for example, 'I am a Tswana speaker.'

To help you think about how your home language/s affect you, imagine if you spoke a different language at home. In small groups talk about the ways in which your life might be different. Then talk about how the language/s you do speak affect what you think, who your friends are, how well you do at school, what you read and so on.

We can say that the language/s we speak at home affect who we are and how we live. In other words, language is a strong part of every person's identity.

LANGUAGES, IDENTITIES AND POWER



The following activities all need language:

praying, singing, telling secrets, dreaming, playing games, gossiping, talking to a close friend on the phone, writing a diary, making a confession, telling jokes, swearing, lying, complaining, learning history and so on.

Choose three activities that you always do in *only one* language. The activity may be on the list above or you may have thought of other activities.

Then in small groups, discuss *why* you can only do these activities in one language. Which language do you use for each activity? What would happen if a law were passed forbidding you to do these activities in your chosen language?

Half the class should do role play A, the other half should do role play B.

Role play A

Think of a situation where one of you felt you gained advantage or power because you could speak a particular language. Role play the situation, showing who was there, what happened, which languages were used and how one of you gained power.

Role play B

Think of a situation where one of you felt you were disadvantaged or where you felt you lost power because of the language you speak. Role play the situation, showing who was there, what happened, which languages were used and how one of you was disadvantaged.

After the role plays, discuss the following questions:

1. Which language was the most powerful in each situation? Why? Who benefited most from the situation and why?
2. Which language had the least power in each situation? Why? Who benefited least from the situation and why? How did these people feel? Could these people have done anything to give themselves more power in the situation?

YOU WITHOUT YOUR LANGUAGES

Read the passage below by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a famous Kenyan writer. In the passage, Ngugi remembers his early school experiences of English and his home tongue.

I was born into a large peasant family: father, four wives and about twenty-eight children. I also belonged, as we all did in those days, to a wider extended family and to the community as a whole.

We spoke Gikuyu as we worked in the fields. We spoke Gikuyu in and outside the home. I can vividly recall those evenings of storytelling around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to other children who worked in the fields picking the flowers, tea-leaves or coffee beans of our European and African landlords ...

The home and the field were then our pre-primary school but what was important, for this discussion, is that the language of our evening teach-ins, the language of our immediate and wider community, and the language of our work in the fields were one.

And then I went to school ... For my first four years of school there was still harmony between the language of my formal education and that of the Limuru peasant community. The language of my education was still Gikuyu. The very first time I was ever given an ovation for my writing was over a composition in Gikuyu.

It was after the declaration of the state of emergency over Kenya in 1952 that all the schools ... were taken over by the colonial regime... The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture ... English became the language of my formal education. In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was *the* language, and all others had to bow before it in deference.

Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment – three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks – or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. Sometimes the culprits were fined money they could hardly afford.

The attitude to English was the opposite; any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prizes, prestige, applause, the ticket to higher realms. English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences and all the other branches of learning. English became the main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education ...

The language was taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds.

What was the colonial system doing to us Kenyan children?

What were the consequences of, on the one hand, this systematic suppression of our languages and the literature they carried, and on the other hand the elevation of English and the literature it carried?

Slightly adapted from Ngugi wa Thiong'o
Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African Literature

YOU WITHOUT YOUR LANGUAGES

Read the passage by Ngugi and discuss the following questions:

1. Why did English have more value at Ngugi's school?
2. Why do you think the school punished children for using their home language?
3. What do you think are the effects on children of forbidding them to use their home language/s?
4. How does Ngugi feel about his home language Gikuyu? What does he feel about English?
5. How do you feel about your home language/s? Explain your attitudes. What are your attitudes towards the other language/s you use at school?



"I do not always feel comfortable using English – in fact, I sometimes feel very limited. I cannot use English to express what I'm *really* feeling or what I think when I'm emotional. When I'm angry or sad or very excited, I automatically use my home language Xhosa – that's the language that let's me feel most myself. After using English at school all day, I want to relax so I naturally use Xhosa to speak to people."

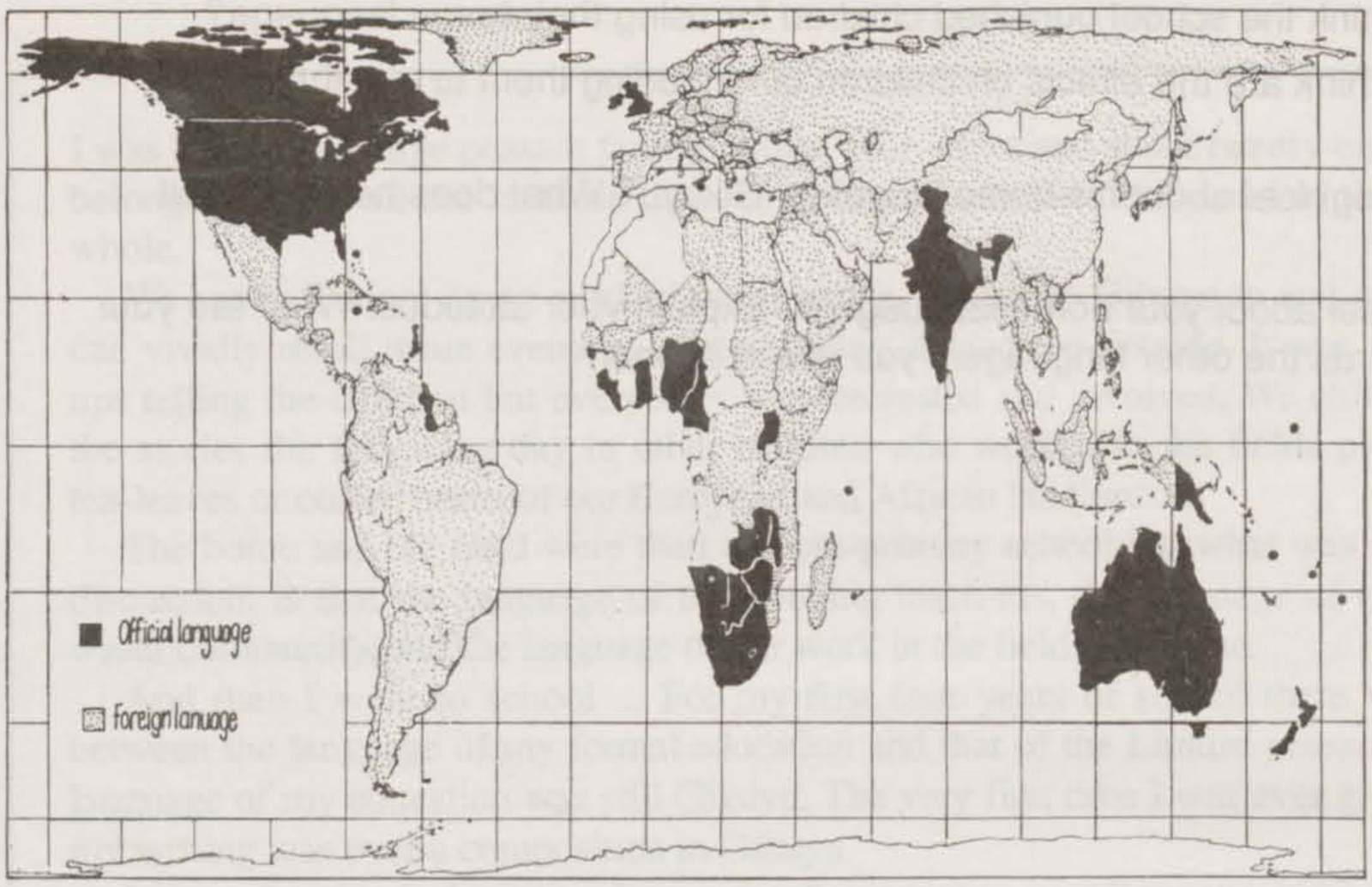
Teacher from Port Elizabeth

Write in any language about one of the following:

1. An experience when you were forbidden to use your home language/s.
2. An experience when you were mocked about the way you speak.
3. Any experience that changed your attitude towards a language that you speak.
4. Interview your parents or grandparents about one of the above experiences. Then record the interview in writing.

ENGLISH IN THE WORLD

The map shows where in the world English is spoken as a mother tongue and/or an official language. The map also shows where in the world English is an important foreign language.



About 350 million people in the world speak English as their mother tongue or first language.

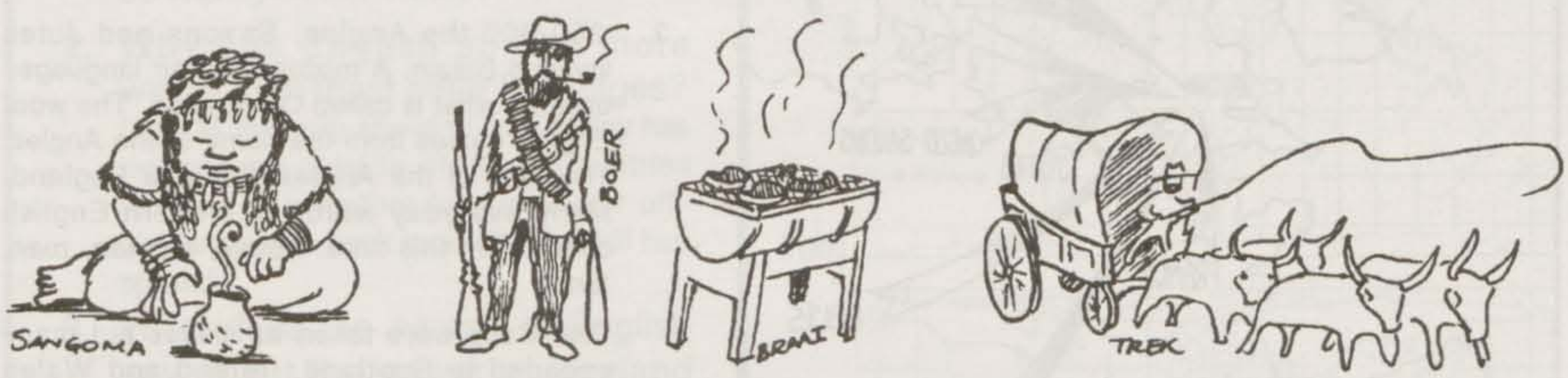
About 1400 million people live in countries where English is one of the official languages. Not everybody in these countries can speak English.

Before you discuss these questions about English in the world make sure you understand the map.

1. There are many many more non-mother-tongue speakers of English than mother-tongue speakers of English. How do you think this affects English?
2. Who do you think influences English the most? Mother-tongue or non-mother-tongue speakers?
3. The map and the shaded boxes tell us about who speaks English. They do not tell us about who can read and write English. Think about who can read and write English. Who are these people? Who does not get to read and write English? Who controls written English?
4. Think about the English you use at school and the English in the textbooks. Are they the same? Who controls spoken English at school? Who controls written English at school?

Make a list of all the words from the African languages and from Afrikaans that are also used in English. Some common examples are *Boer, lobola, sangoma, braai.*

Make a list of all the words from South African English which are used in English all over the world. Some common examples are *apartheid, trek.*



Make a list of words from other languages that exist in your home language/s.

Many dictionaries tell you when a word comes from another language. Many words in all languages have their origins in another language. Study how a dictionary gives the origin of words in the examples below.

verkrampte /fɛə'kræmptə/ *adj. & n. S.Afr.* —*adj.* politically or socially conservative or reactionary, esp. as regards apartheid. —*n.* a person holding such views. [Afrik., lit. narrow, cramped]
verligte /fɛə'lɪxtə/ *adj. & n. S.Afr.* —*adj.* progressive or enlightened, esp. as regards apartheid. —*n.* a person holding such views. [Afrik., = enlightened]

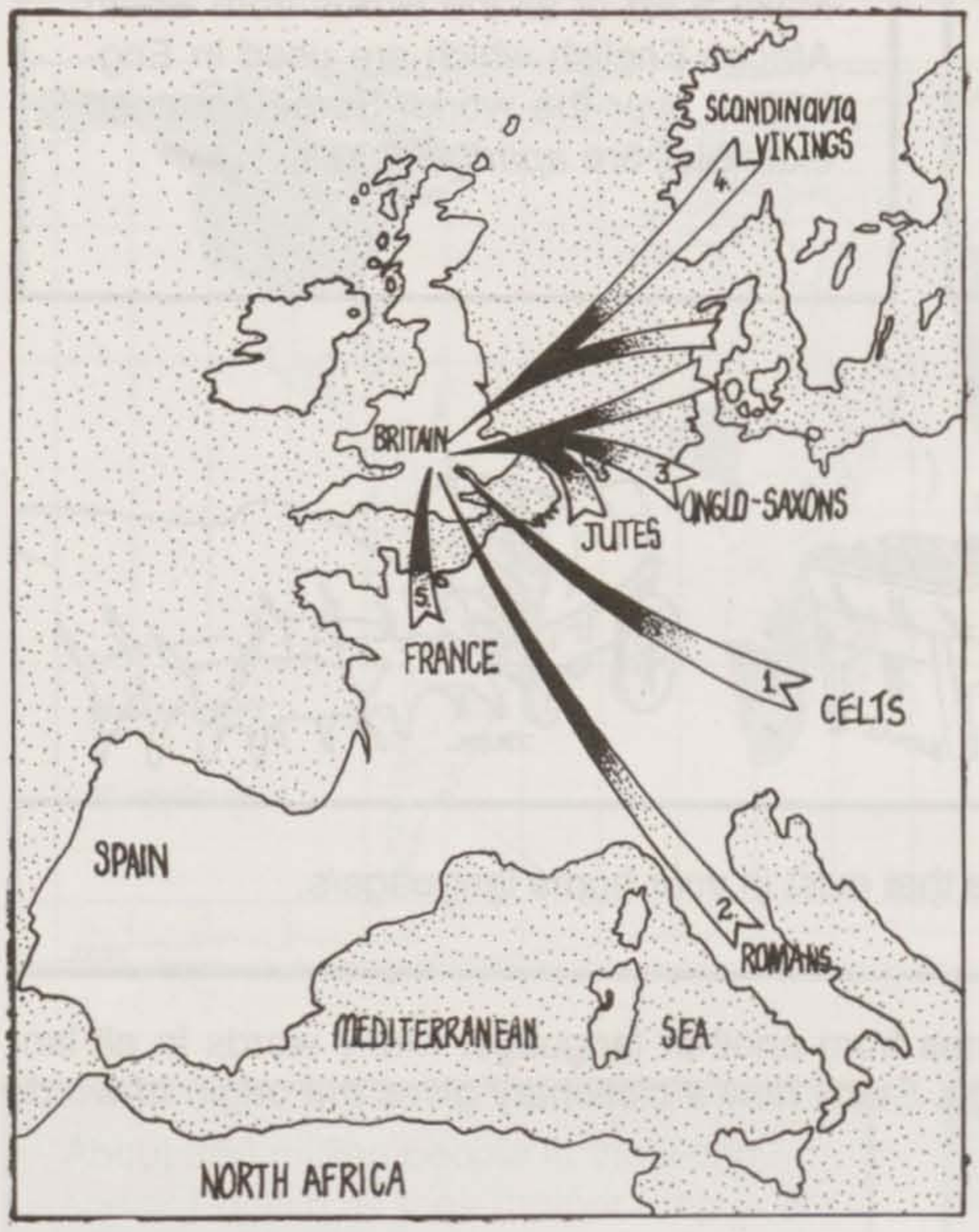
From the *Concise Oxford Dictionary.*

Discuss the following questions in small groups:

1. Why and when do you think languages lend words to one another and borrow words from one another?
2. Which languages in South Africa do more lending than borrowing? Why?
3. Which languages in South Africa do more borrowing than lending? Why?
4. Spend some time looking up the origin of English words in a dictionary which gives word origins. Make a list of all the languages you come across that have given words to English.
5. In the light of your discussions and your dictionary study, who do you think owns English?

HOW DID ENGLISH BECOME A LANGUAGE?

Study the map below and read the notes next to it.



Map from *Language and Power*

1. Several hundred years BC, the Celts settled in Britain. They came from central Europe and spoke Celtic.
2. 43 AD the Romans conquered Britain. Latin became the official language. Celtic was the language of the people. The Romans forced many Celts to convert to Christianity. Many English words associated with the Church have Latin origins: *wine, angel, candle, bishop.*
3. 350-600 the Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded Britain. A mixture of their languages became what is called Old English. The word *English* comes from the name of the Angles. The land of the Angles, became England. Many everyday words of modern English come from this time: *house, woman, man, farm.*

   The Celts were taken as slaves but many escaped to Scotland, Ireland and Wales where forms of Celtic are still spoken today.
4. In the 800s, the Vikings from Scandinavia invaded England. Many words with roots in Viking language entered Old English: *egg, skin, ugly, cake.*
5. In 1066 the Normans invaded and took over England. French became the official language. Latin was used in Church and the people spoke Old English. Many English words about government and culture have French origins: *justice, government, nation, music, poem.*

There were many different kinds of Old English spoken in England. Also, people wrote Old English differently in different parts of England. By 1400, the dialect of Old English spoken in and around London became the most powerful. It was the dialect which was used in government, the courts, commerce and at the two English universities of the time. This dialect became known as standard English.

In 1476, the printing press was invented and books could now be produced in large numbers. Standard English was used by the new publishing industry. The spelling and grammar of English became more fixed with the printing of books.

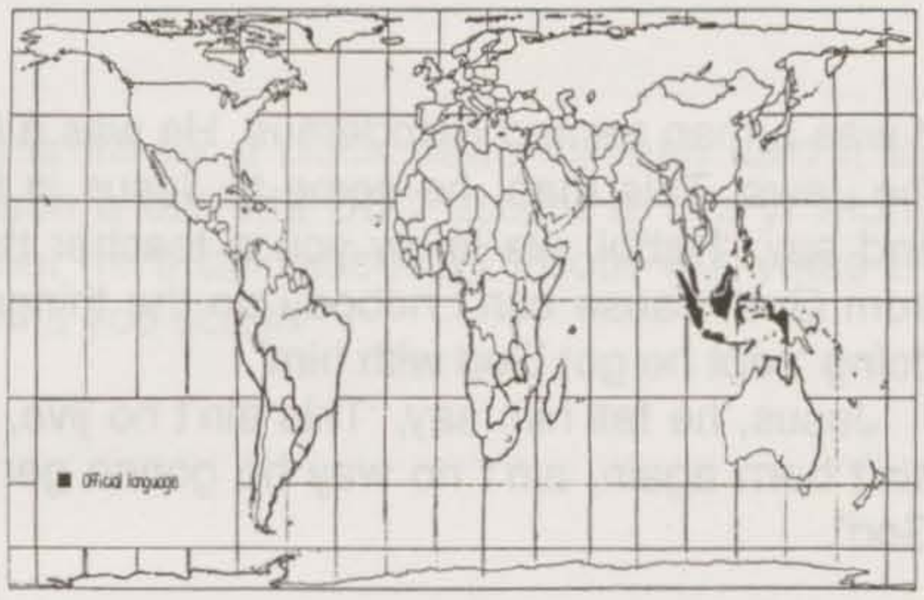
After reading about the development of English, discuss some of the following questions:

1. Look at Shakespeare's English, which was used about 300 years ago. How has English changed since then?
2. Is there such a thing as a pure language?
3. Can anyone stop written English from changing? Why/why not?
4. Compare the slang you use today with the slang your parents used at your age. Explain the changes. Why do you think it has changed?

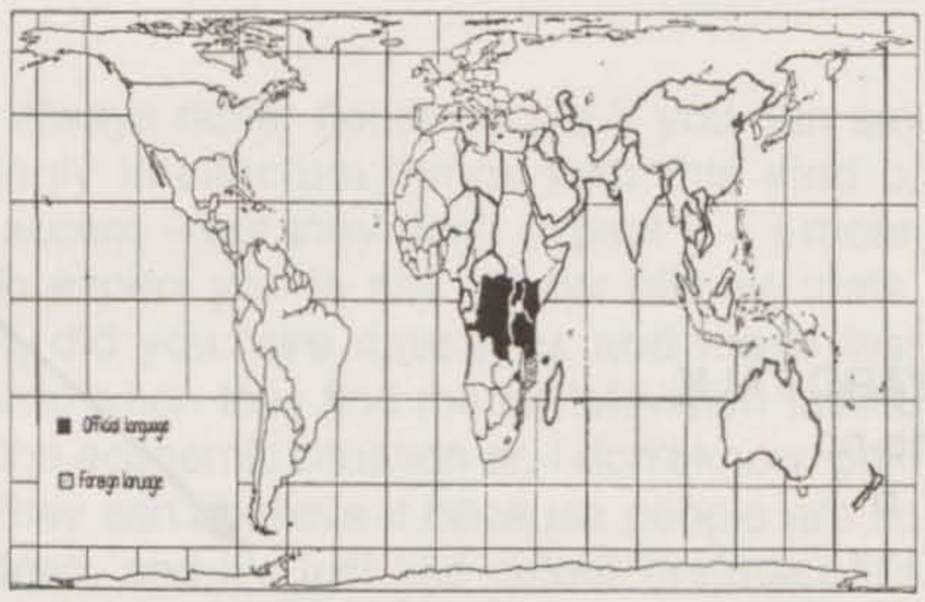
HOW AND WHY DID ENGLISH SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD?

On the opposite page is a map showing the development of English in England. Now find England on the world map on page 10. Up till the end of the 16th century, very little English was spoken outside of England. On the map on page 10 you can see how English has spread across the world in the past 400 years or so.

1. How and why did English spread so widely in the world?
2. Why has English spread more widely than most other languages?
   Look at the map showing how Malay has *not* spread outside of those countries where it is a mother tongue and/or official language. Look how little Swahili has spread.
3. What does the spread of English say about the power of England and America over the past 300 years?
4. Does this spread of English make people who speak English more powerful than people who don't? Why/ why not?



Malay



Swahili

MISSIONARIES EDUCATION ENTERTAINMENT TRADE WARS

CAPITALISM SLAVERY TV

POLITICS TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH PROJECT

Choose a country (not in the United Kingdom, North America, South Africa or Australia) which has English as an official language – use the map on page 10 to help you choose. Do some research into the history of this country to find out why English is so important in the country. The questions below may help you do your research.

1. Who brought English to this country? When? Why did English speakers come to this country in the first place? How were they received?
2. What are the home languages of people in this country?
3. What is the present relationship between this country and England and/or America?
4. What is the relationship between the different language groups in this country? Which language groups are rich? Which are poor?
5. About how many people in the country can speak English? How many can read English? What language/s are used on radio, TV and in the newspapers?

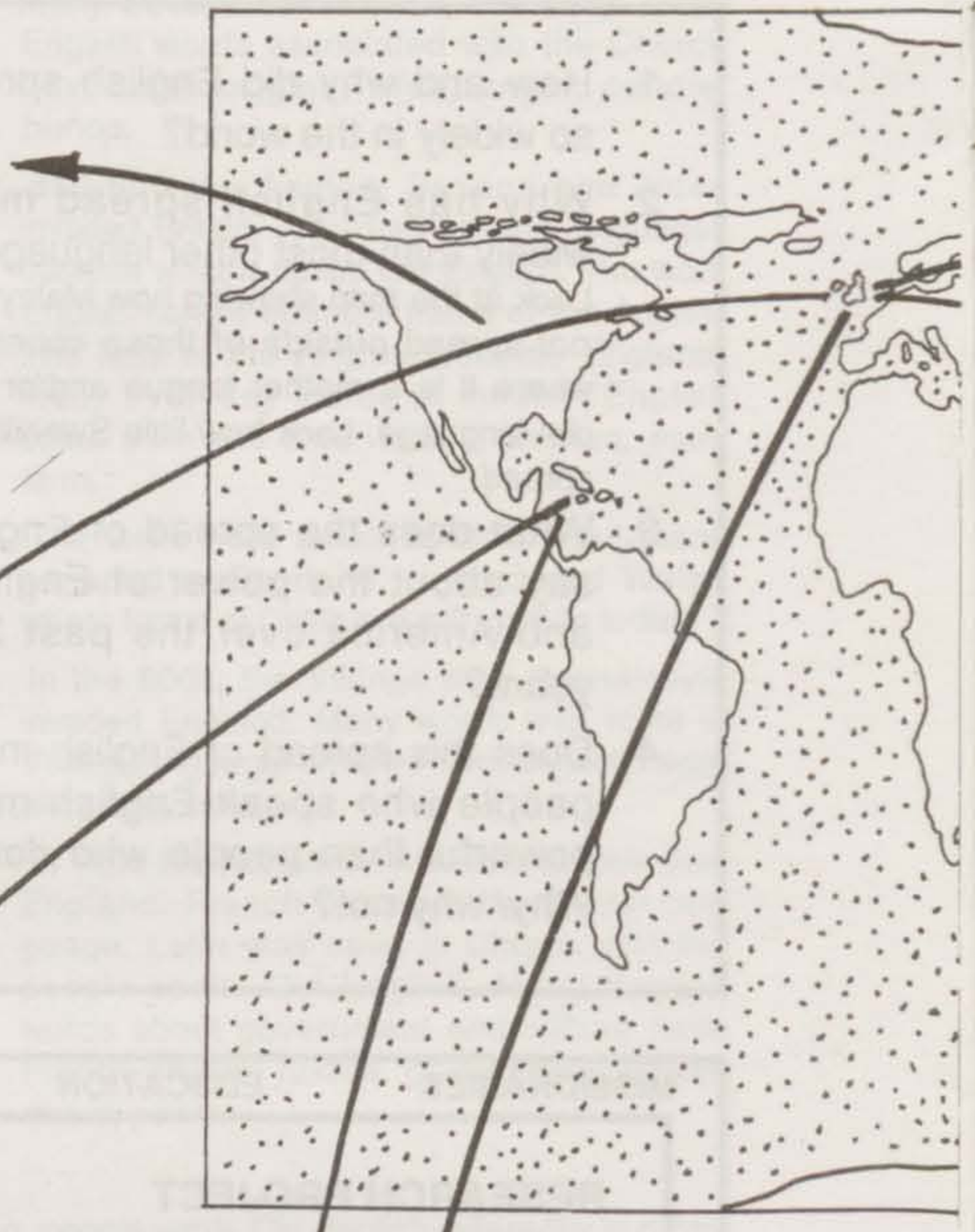
POP MUSIC CONQUEST IMPERIALISM COLONIALISM

HOW MANY ENGLISHES IN THE WORLD?

You looked at the spread of English in the world. What happened to English as it spread? Should we say that English is a world language or that there are many Englishes in the world?

It was a man named Nicodemus. He was a leader of the Jews. This man, he come to Jesus in the night and say, 'Rabbi, we know you a teacher that come from God, cause can't nobody do the things you be doing 'cept he got God with him'.

Jesus, he tell him say, 'This ain't no jive, if a man ain't born again, ain't no way he gonna get to know God'.



YARD TALK
no-no
b
r
o
k
e
n
inglish
mi a knuckle up buckle up an chuckle up
mi words
like the stammer of sentences in de bottom
of some people's throat
yardtalkinginglishin tosubmission
till mi pat-wa bus tru an conquer ...

Desmond Johnson

Den when we start to shout
bout a culture o we own
a language o we own
a identity o we own
dem an de others dey leave to control us so
STOP THAT NONSENSE NOW
We're all British!

Merle Collins

HOW MANY ENGLISHES IN THE WORLD?

Read the examples of some of the different Englishes from different places in the world. Notice that in some of the examples English is written the way it is spoken in the particular country.



this is thi six a clock news thi man said n thi reason a talk wia BBC accent iz coz yi widny wahnt mi ti talk about thi trooth wia voice lik wanna yoo scruff.

And it always rather floors people if you can say amazingly intellectual things with this kind of funny accent – but they don't expect it – I mean they do expect you to say, 'O cor blimey, mate, yes sir, did you 'ave sausages and mash last night' and when they find me on television talking about the economic situation or, I don't know, politics – they can't believe it because people are so prejudiced, and it's just like colour prejudice it's very, very similar. It's what I call 'accent prejudice'.

Think about English in South Africa.

1. How many Englishes are there in South Africa? Who speaks them?
2. What are the differences between these Englishes? How do you think the differences came about?
3. Which English do you speak?
4. Whose English is used on radio, TV and in newspapers?
5. Which English has more status and power than others? Why?

Now write a poem about any aspect of English in South Africa or a personal experience of English you have had. You may want to write so that the accent of the English is clear.

WHO OWNS ENGLISH IN SOUTH AFRICA?

- In South Africa 9% of the population speaks English as a home language.
- Most South Africans who speak English have other home languages such as Venda, Sotho, Afrikaans.

Now read the following statements. Decide whether you agree or disagree with each statement. Then in small groups, debate one or two statements which people have different opinions about.

Only mother-tongue English speakers in South Africa speak pure and correct English.

South African English is the English that most South Africans speak.

English is the language of liberation. People's English can unite the different language groups.

English standards must be set by radio, TV and newspapers.

Write your own opinion here

Everybody who speaks English has the right to speak the way they do speak.

In a democratic South Africa, all Englishes will be equal.

English is more suited to education than other languages because it is more logical.

WHO OWNS AFRIKAANS IN SOUTH AFRICA?

What are your attitudes to Afrikaans? Read the statements below and decide if each statement is true or false. Write T or F next to each box. Make your own statements about Afrikaans in the empty boxes.

Afrikaans is a language of white people.

Afrikaans is the newest language in the world.

Afrikaans is the language of the oppressor.

Mother-tongue Afrikaans speakers are the second largest language group in South Africa.

Close to 50% of so-called Afrikaners are so-called Coloureds.

Afrikaans is a language of liberation.

Afrikaans is a people's language.

Now read about the history of Afrikaans on the following page. Then come back to the statements above. Have you changed your mind about any statement? If so, why?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRIKAANS

1652 Dutch settlers arrive at the Cape. They have contact with the Khoi people already living there and soon start to bring slaves from Malaysia and India to the Cape. The Dutch promise slaves their freedom if they learn Dutch.

1750 The language of the Dutch settlers is now called Cape Dutch. The Cape Malays use Cape Dutch as their mother-tongue and Malay and Arabic to practise their religion, Islam.

Over the next 50 years Afrikaans develops, mainly from Dutch, with words from Malay and Khoi languages, and French, Portuguese and German.

1775 By now Afrikaans is the colloquial language spoken by all population groups.

1800 The British start settling in the Cape and they take over control. About 2 000 Boers trek to escape British rule. The Boers establish the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

1840 By now the Cape Malays use Afrikaans, not Arabic for all their religious practices and Islamic books are written in Afrikaans in Arabic script. The Cape Malays, the Boers in the OFS and the Transvaal and the white Afrikaners in the Cape speak different varieties of Afrikaans.

1875 The Association of True Afrikaners is formed. It aims to develop Afrikaans as a written language. Its members begin to write dictionaries and grammar books. This standardisation of Afrikaans is based on the Afrikaans of white-upper-middle class Afrikaners in the Cape. There is no recognition of the Afrikaans of the Cape 'Coloureds'. The Association begins to translate the Bible into 'standard' Afrikaans for 'Coloured' Christians.

1875 In the years to come, the development of Afrikaans becomes a part of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the white Afrikaner struggle against British political and economic control in South Africa. This leads to the Anglo-Boer War in 1899-1902. The British refuse to recognise Afrikaans as an official language.

1910 The constitution of the Union of South Africa recognises English and Dutch, not Afrikaans, as official languages.

1925 Afrikaans is recognised as an official language, instead of Dutch. By this time Afrikaans is the medium in schools for white Afrikaners and in all churches for Afrikaners.

Money is poured into developing Afrikaans so that it can function as an official language in courts, parliament, schools and so on. Afrikaans becomes the fastest developing language in the world.

1944 The Smuts government tries to enforce dual medium instruction (English and Afrikaans) in white schools. White Afrikaans teachers threaten to strike.

1948 The National Party comes to power. Afrikaner Nationalists hold strongly to the ideal of mother-tongue education and try to increase the influence of Afrikaans. Over the years they try to extend mother-tongue education to Std 6 in black schools and to replace English with Afrikaans in higher primary and secondary schools.

1953 The Bantu Education Act is passed. Afrikaans is made a compulsory subject in all schools. Dual medium instruction in English and Afrikaans is introduced in black secondary schools.

1976 The student uprisings against Bantu Education and Afrikaans begin in Soweto and spread across the country.

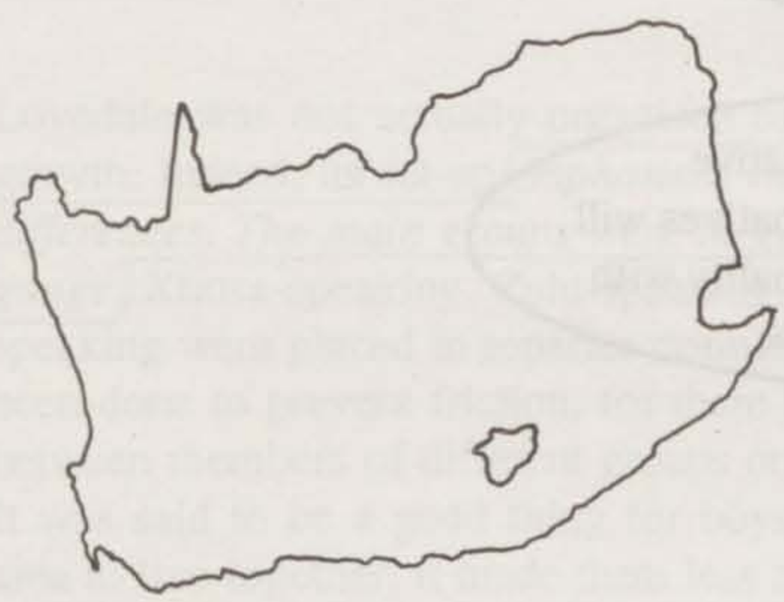
1979 Finally, after years of delegations, petitions and protest, the Department of Education and Training agrees to limit mother-tongue instruction to the first four years of schools and to let parents decide the medium (English or Afrikaans) thereafter. Most schools choose English.

1993 Today there are many different ideas about the future of Afrikaans. Sixteen per cent of South Africa's population speaks Afrikaans as a mother-tongue and only half of these are white Afrikaners. Many black mother-tongue Afrikaans speakers are re-claiming their language and Afrikaans is no longer so closely identified with apartheid and apartheid education. There is much debate as to whether Afrikaans should remain an official language or not.

WHO CONTROLS/OWNS THE AFRICAN LANGUAGES?

Discuss the following questions in groups. Get into groups according to the home language you know best.

1. Is there more than one variety of your home language? Who speaks which variety? In what context? Where in the country? What variety/varieties do you speak? Why?
2. Which variety of this language is used in school textbooks? Who speaks this variety? Is the language in your textbooks the same as the language you use at home? Who decides which variety to use in the textbooks?
3. Is your home language used on TV, radio, in books, newspapers? If so, which variety is used?
4. Which African language has the most power in South Africa? Why? Which African language has the least power? Why?
5. Tell each other about a good book you have read in any African language. Why was it good?



Draw a language map of the African languages in South Africa. Do this as follows:

- Use a different colour for each language.
- In colour, show where each African language is the main language spoken.
- Some areas may get messy because it is not clear which is the main African language in the area. Try to label these areas with explanations of the language situation in the area.

You will land up with a map showing different language regions in South Africa.

"Any one language, English, or Afrikaans, or Xhosa, may be used to oppress other people, or to liberate them. Xhosa, spoken by some, is the language of the oppressor. Spoken by others, Xhosa is the language of the oppressed fighting for their freedom."

Adapted from CASA resolution

RESEARCH PROJECT

In pairs, interview five students about their attitudes towards learning an African language at school. Before you do the interviews, plan and write down the questions you will ask. Make sure you get to know the reasons why people have the attitudes they do. Also, try to find solutions to any problems that students may have in learning an African language at school.

DOES LANGUAGE DIVIDE OR UNITE PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

LANGUAGE AND APARTHEID EDUCATION

1944
Christian National Education

God has willed it that there shall be separate nations, each with its own language and that mother-tongue education is accordingly the will of God. The parent should accordingly have no choice in this case.

1948
Christian National Education

The mother tongue must be the basis of native education and teaching but ... the two official languages must be taught as subjects because they are official languages and ... the keys to the cultural loans that are necessary to his own cultural progress.

1953
Verwoerd

'When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them.'

Discuss in groups:

The language policy of Afrikaner Nationalists separated people on the basis of their mother tongue: Sotho-speakers from Zulu-speakers, English-speakers from Afrikaans-speakers and so on.

1. What were the consequences of this policy?
2. How did this policy affect your parents' lives?
3. How did this policy affect your own life? How did this policy affect where you live, where you go to school, who you go to school with?
4. How did this policy affect your language skills?
5. How did this policy affect your education?

Give explanations for all your answers.

DOES LANGUAGE DIVIDE OR UNITE PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

Read the passage below, then answer the questions:

As I look back on it now, it seems that the most valuable experience at Lovedale was the intimate contact it provided among boys and girls from different groups and different parts of the country. This contact rubbed away whatever I still had of the *strange notions one grows up with about members of groups with different languages and customs.* I got to know some of these languages, Xhosa and Zulu. I made fast friends with boys of these other peoples and learned through them that my own Tswana were not the only true humans in the universe. I had known such contacts before in the streets of the Kimberley Location where, in my boyhood, I had played with all sorts of children, but when evening came we parted. Here at Lovedale, *we lived and worked together and, in doing so, overcame our ignorance and our prejudice about each other.*

Lovedale was not actually organised to encourage this kind of growth. Indeed, its set-up *emphasised rather than minimised our differences. The main groups were in general separated by language.* Xhosa-speaking, Zulu-speaking, and Sotho-(or Tswana) speaking were placed in separate dormitories. I was told this had been done to prevent friction, for there had been pitched battles between members of different groups on the institution grounds. It was said to be a good thing for boys from the same general area to live together; it made them less homesick. Even sports at the school tended to be organised along *language divisions.* But in practice, we broke through all these institutional conceptions and barriers. The common life at the school provided a new basis for mutual knowledge, mutual living, for acquaintance and friendship. The crossing of lines took place in the most natural way, fertilising and changing ideas and attitudes. Close associations were formed which, as we all found later, provided the basis for co-operation in many other spheres of life. If anybody had told me when I entered Lovedale that I would marry a Xhosa-speaking girl, I would have said he was talking nonsense. But that is precisely what I did. Before that, *some of my most enduring friendships had been formed and they crossed all barriers of language, of custom, and of place.*

from *Freedom For My People* by ZK Matthews

What are the strange notions ZK Matthews is referring to? Give a few examples of any strange notions you hold/held about other language groups.

How can ignorance about people lead to prejudice? Give some personal experiences of this.

Why do you think Lovedale emphasised the differences between language groups? What were Lovedale's reasons?

What helped the students of Lovedale to cross all barriers of language, custom and place? Have you ever overcome barriers of language? When and how?

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Now we will think about languages used in school – the medium of instruction (the language used to teach and learn, the language of the textbooks and exams: for example English or Afrikaans) and languages taught as subjects (for example Zulu). There have been many problems about medium of instruction in South Africa. As a result of the 1976 uprisings, most secondary schools use English as a medium of instruction. However, even though most people are happy with English, there are many difficulties for students and teachers in classrooms. Think about your school situation and your personal language needs in the classroom, in the schoolyard and for your future. Think about everything you feel about languages in South Africa – about language and your identity, about which languages have more power than others, about the varieties of language used outside school, about which languages can help you most in different situations, about the multilingual reality of South Africa. Think about the many issues we have discussed in the book so far.

What should be the role of English at school? What should be the role of home languages at school?

Which language/s should be the medium of instruction in the classroom? Why? What are the advantages of this MI? what are the disadvantages of this MI?

What do you need to help you succeed in the MI? Think about textbooks, libraries etc.

When you write in English, which variety should you use? Why? Explain carefully how your teachers should mark written English.

GUIDELINES AND POLICY

In small groups draw up a set of guidelines for the use of languages in your school.

To help you do this, answer the questions around this box.

Some examples of what you may say:

English should be the medium of instruction

The library should have many more books in African languages.

Include any other issues that have not been raised.

Which languages should be taught as subjects? Why? What do you need to help you use these languages better? Which variety of these languages should be accepted at school?

What should be the language of school assemblies? Why? What should be the language of SRC meetings? Why?

Should there be guidelines for languages used during breaktimes? Why/why not? If you think there should, draw up some guidelines.

Each group should put its policy on the wall. As a whole class discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each policy. Ask:

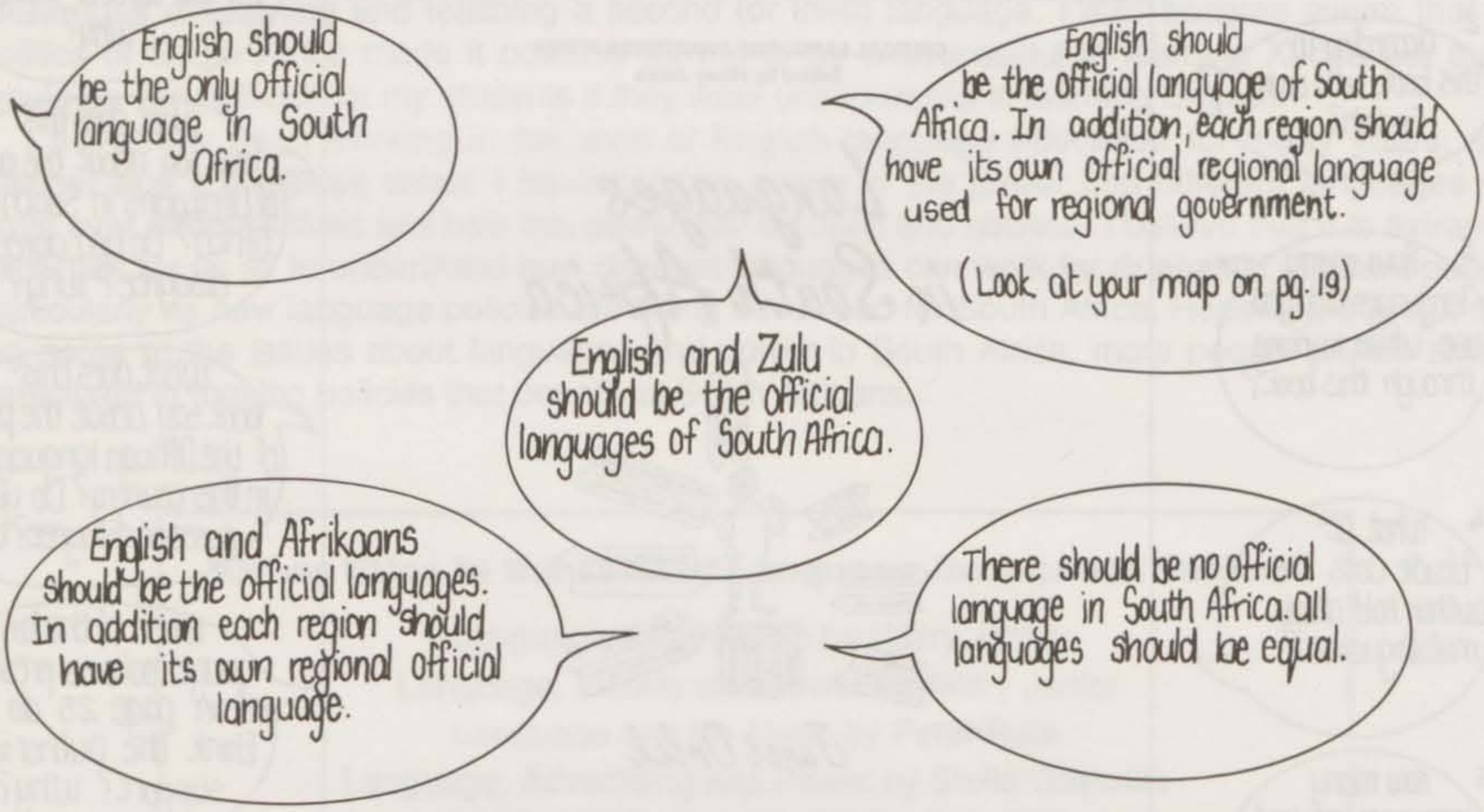
- Which students will benefit most from this policy?
- Which students will benefit least from this policy?
- How will I benefit from this policy?

Then combine all the strengths of the different policies into one final language policy that you can all accept. Keep a copy of the policy on the classroom wall and present your policy to the staff, the SRC, the PTSA for discussion.

LANGUAGE POLICY FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

A country's language policy usually states which language/s will be official. An official language is the language in which the government works, laws are written, that the courts use. The official language/s must be taught in schools.

As South Africa moves towards democracy, many people, groups and political parties are debating whether South Africa should have an official language and if so which language/s should be official. Below are some of the main positions held by different people and groups.



Discuss which of the above language policies would be best for a democratic South Africa. The following questions may help your discussion:

1. Who will benefit most from each of the above language policies? Explain.
2. Who will benefit least from each of the above language policies? Explain.
3. Which policy would benefit you most? Why?
4. Which policy would benefit most South Africans? Why?
5. Which policy would most help to unite all South Africans?
6. Arrange the policies in order, from the least expensive to the most expensive.

Remember everything we have discussed in this book, especially:

- Most South Africans speak two or more languages.
- Apartheid used language to divide and separate people.
- Language is a strong part of every person's identity.
- All languages change over time.

WHAT ABOUT LANGUAGE/S IN THIS BOOK?

In small groups, discuss the questions below about this book.

1. Why is this book written in English?

2. According to this book, who owns English?

3. How many languages did you use while working through this book?

4. What attitude does the author hold about multilingualism?

5. How many languages are used in this book? Does this support the author's attitude towards multilingualism?

6. What does this book say about language and identity?

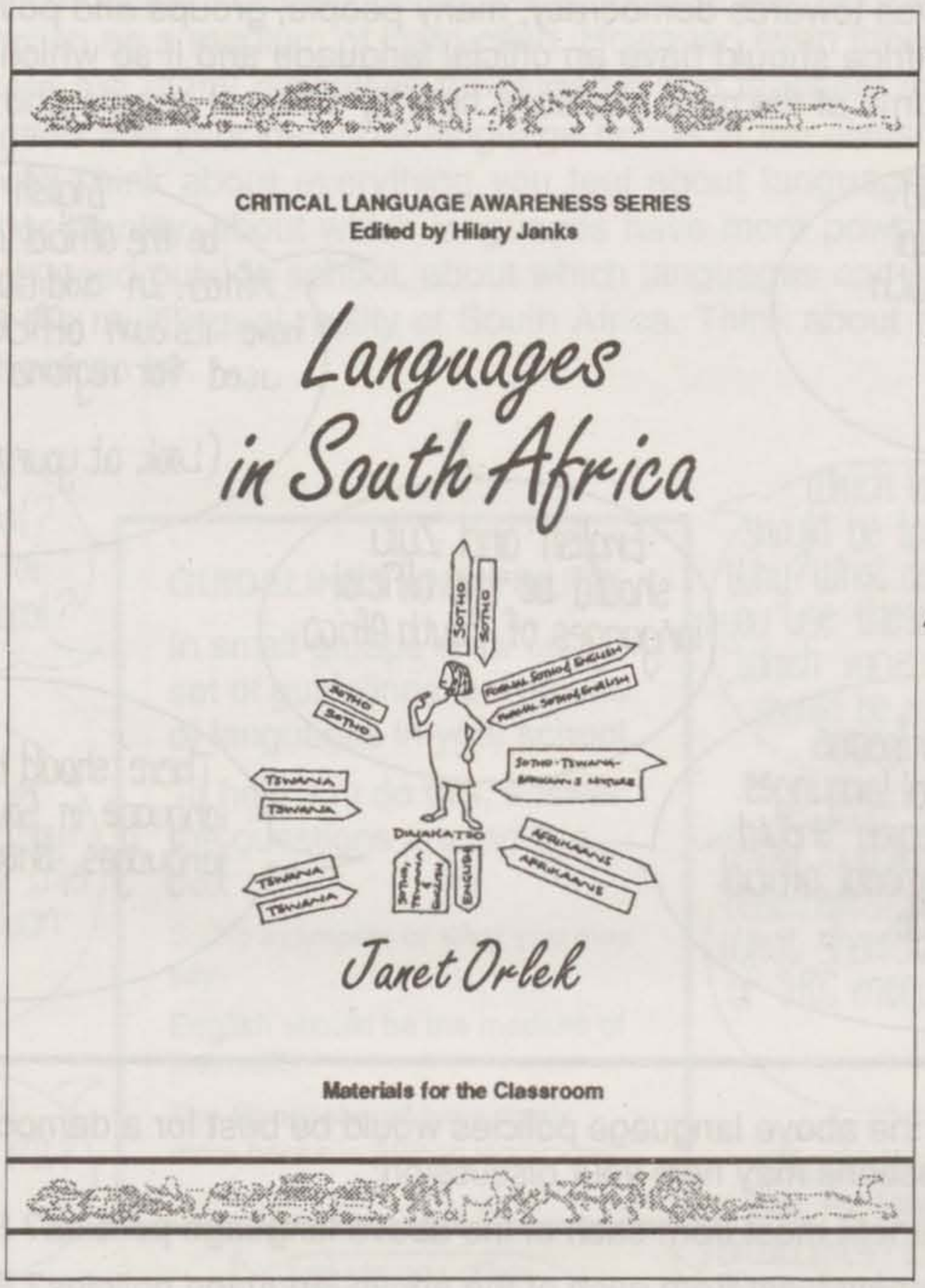
7. What does this book say about the power of English in South Africa? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

8. What does this book say about the power of Afrikaans in South Africa? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

9. What does this book say about the power of the African languages in this country? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

10. Which of the language policies presented on page 23 do you think the author would support? Why?

11. What does this book not say about languages in South Africa that you think is important?



You can ask these questions about other books, movies, TV programmes, people and so on to help you think about their attitudes towards language and power.

Remember that they may say one thing about languages but they may use language/s in a way that contradicts what they say.



My name is Janet Orlek. I grew up and went to school in Johannesburg. As an English speaking South African I went to English-medium schools and later to English-medium universities. At the government primary school I attended, we had a Zulu school song which we sang (without understanding) at sports competitions against other English- and Afrikaans-medium primary schools. We never questioned why we couldn't compete against African primary schools. At secondary school, we questioned why we had to learn Afrikaans but we never questioned why we could not learn an African language or why we learnt French.

After university, I started teaching English and Mathematics to a secondary school in a small village in the Transkei. I tried to learn Xhosa, with little success, through private lessons, books and interacting with people in the street. I soon experienced some of the difficulties and challenges of learning and teaching a second (or third) language. I also became aware that the politics of South Africa made it possible for me to be unsuccessful in learning Xhosa but that it would be very difficult for my students if they were unsuccessful in learning English.

I have now been working in the area of English language education for many years, as a teacher and a materials writer. I have become aware of the power that different languages can have over people's lives and how this power can be used and abused. I believe that it is extremely important for us all to understand how different languages can work for or against different people, particularly as new language policies are being developed for South Africa. Hopefully, through raising some of the issues about languages and power in South Africa, more people will be able to participate in making policies that benefit all South Africans.

Other titles in the Critical Language Awareness Series:

Language and Position by Hilary Janks
Language, Identity and Power by Hilary Janks
Language and the News by Peter Rule
Language, Advertising and Power by Stella Granville
Words and Pictures by Denise Newfield

All the writers in this series are teachers who are interested in the relationship between language and power. They have worked together with their students or other teachers to produce a workbook. I would like to encourage students and teachers to construct their own Critical Language Awareness materials and am willing to consider publishing complete workbooks as part of the series. There are so many ways of exploring language and power that the series must necessarily remain open ended.

The writers and I would also welcome constructive suggestions on how to improve the published workbooks.

Series Editor

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