

Topic :

Language Dynamics in Grade 9 multilingual Classrooms of EX-Model
C High Schools in the Gauteng West District

Done By

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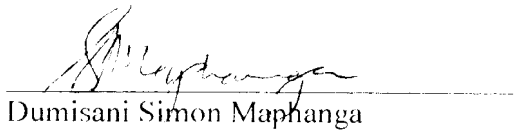
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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this research report is my own. I have acknowledged all sources that have been of assistance. This report is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science Education at the University of the Witwatersrand and has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.



Dumisani Simon Maphanga

01 September 2011

ABSTRACT

The abolishment of apartheid in the early 1990s has led to a consistent influx of black learners from township schools into Ex-Model C schools (former white schools) in search of better education (Gee, 1995; Doe, 1996). Most of the learners have little or insufficient command of the English language (Adler, 2001). This is because in their previous schools they were taught mainly in their mother tongues or African languages and partly in English (SASA, 1996).

Consequently, the language-in-education policy advocated the use of African languages so that these once marginalized languages could assist learners to access academic knowledge, including Mathematics (Doe, 1996). In theory, the implementation of the language-in-education policy leads to the equitable promotion of all of South Africa's eleven official languages. According to SASA, it is the learners' constitutional right to be taught in their preferred language (SASA, 1996).

The research aims of this study were structured around language challenges, diversities and dynamics that prevail in Ex-Model C Schools for the ESL learners. For instance, some learners might not even speak English at their homes, but have to learn and apply mathematical English concepts. In this report I present evidence gathered from the parents, learners, classroom observations and educators pertaining to these issues. Three Ex-Model C Schools were selected. Parents of all three schools completed a questionnaire as did learners in 3 Mathematics classes at these schools. Three learners from each participating school were interviewed. Three educators from these schools were also interviewed. Classroom observations were undertaken and videotaped and transcripts were made for analysis.

One of the major findings that was made in this research concerned the teaching methods that educators could use for ESL learners who had a weak command of English. These included systematic repetition and persistent probing through the use of proper English coupled with the insertion of vernacular phrases to elucidate the intended meaning.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following people who inspired me and even supported me during my years of study: my wife Ntombikhona and my two sons Ndumiso and Malibongwe; my sister Londiwe, my niece Noxolo and nephew Xolani; my former principal Dr VK Joseph and staff of Mandisa Shiceka High School; my former district and staff of Gauteng West District, the director Elize Froneman, CES CDS unit head Peter Skosana and the GDE GET Mathematics facilitators, the GDE GET curriculum unit staff at Provincial Head Office of the Gauteng Province; my present director for GDE GET Phumelele Tloubatla and my manager Gopalan Derek Moodley; and the Church of End-Time Gospel in Tshepisong West (Mnandini) and Braamfischerville. Above all, I would like to forward my deepest gratitude to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1. Apartheid: in the context of this setting this refers to the erstwhile segregation and discrimination of certain population groups of South Africa.
2. Artifacts: The use of a related example, situation, etc. to explain another situation. Through demonstration, mentoring or showing, a better understanding is achieved (Oxford dictionary)
3. Black: refers to people of African origin.
4. Code mixing: According to Li (1998; 2000), code-mixing refers to any admixture of linguistic elements of two or more languages.
5. Code-switching: is defined by Adler (2001) as the use of more than one language in the same conversation.
6. Discourses: ways of being in the world, through interaction and engagements (Moschkovich, (1999).
7. Dynamics: in the context of this study this refers to the diverse usage of languages in the same setting, which might cause inconveniences.
8. English: the English language.
9. Ex-Model C schools/Formal Model C schools: these two terms are used synonymously in this study refer to previously white only schools (SASA, 1996).
10. Formal mathematical language: Adler and Setati (2000) further explain that formal mathematical language refers to the standard use of terminology (mathematical register).
11. Informal mathematical language: Adler and Setati (2000) state that informal language can be referred to as the kind that learners in their everyday lives use to express their mathematical thinking.
12. IsiZulu or Zulu: the Zulu language, as spoken by the Zulu people.
13. Language practices: refers to the manner in which language is used for learning and teaching purposes (Moschkovich, 1999)
14. Linguistic Capital: The linguistic capital refers to the linguistic status of English (Barwell, 2003; Zevenbergen, 2000) or the language of power (Setati, 2002).
15. Mathematics: same as mathematics, meaning the body of knowledge of the subject, SASA (1996)
16. Mathematics talk/informal mathematical language: involves the mathematical discussions that learners engage in, regardless of the proper mathematical syntax or language.

17. Mother tongue/vernacular/African languages: though these terms do not mean the same thing, in this study, however, they refer to any African language.
18. Multilingual: the presence of more than one language in a particular setting (Barwell, 2003).
19. Re-voicing: Re-voicing is the art of identifying what the learner means against what the learner wants to say (Moschkovich, 1996).
20. Setswana: the Setswana or seTswana language, as spoken by the Tswana people.
21. Social goods: Gee (2001) explained that these include employment, status, success in mathematics, etc. that becomes available through the use of the English language.
22. Vernacular: mother tongue, African language.
23. White: in the context of this study this refers to the European race as classified during the apartheid era.

ACRONYMS

1. DOE: Department of Education
2. ESL: English Second Language
3. FET : Further Education and Training
4. GET : General Education and Training
5. LIEP (LISP): Language In Education Policy
6. LISP (LIEP): Language In School Policy
7. LOLT: Language of Learning and Teaching
8. SASA: South African Schools Act
9. SGB: School Governing Body

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