

Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig - Journal for Language Teaching
- Ijenali yokuFundisa iLimi - Ijenali yokuFundisa iiLwimi -
Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi - Tšenale ya tša Go ruta Polelo
- Buka ya Thuto ya Puo - Jenale ya Thuto ya Dipuo - Ijenali
Yekufundzisa Lulwimi - Jena?a ya u Gudisa Nyambo
- Jenala yo Dyondzisa Ririmi - Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig -
Journal for Language Teaching - Ijenali yokuFundisa iLimi
- Ijenali yokuFundisa iiLwimi - Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi
- Tšenale ya tša Go ruta Polelo - Buka ya Thuto ya Puo -
Jenale ya Thuto ya Dipuo - Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi
- Jena?a ya u Gudisa Nyambo - Jenala yo Dyondzisa
Ririmi - Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig - Journal for Language
Teaching - Ijenali yokuFundisa iLimi - Ijenali yokuFundisa
iiLwimi - Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi - Tšenale ya tša Go ruta
Polelo - Buka ya Thuto ya Puo - Jenale ya Thuto ya Dipuo -
Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi - Jena?a ya u Gudisa Nyambo
- Jenala yo Dyondzisa Ririmi
- Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig
- Journal for Language
Teaching - Ijenali
yokuFundisa iLimi -
Ijenali yokuFundisa
iiLwimi - Ibhuku
Lokufundisa Ulimi
- Tšenale ya tša
Go ruta Polelo -
Buka ya Thuto
ya Puo - Jenale
ya Thuto ya Dipuo
Ijenali Yekufundzisa
Lulwimi - Jena?a ya u
Gudisa Nyambo - Jenala yo
Dyondzisa Ririmi - Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig
- Journal for Language Teaching - Ijenali
yokuFundisa iLimi - Ijenali yokuFundisa iiLwimi -
Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi - Tšenale ya tša Go ruta
Polelo - Buka ya Thuto ya Puo - Jenale ya Thuto ya
Dipuo - Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi - Jena?a ya
u Gudisa Nyambo - Jenala yo Dyondzisa Ririmi
- Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig - Journal for Language
Teaching - Ijenali yokuFundisa iLimi - Ijenali
yokuFundisa iiLwimi - Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi -
Tšenale ya tša Go ruta Polelo - Buka ya Thuto ya Puo -
Jenale ya Thuto ya Dipuo - Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi
- Jena?a ya u Gudisa Nyambo - Jenala yo Dyondzisa
Ririmi - Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig - Journal for Language
Teaching - Ijenali yokuFundisa iLimi - Ijenali yokuFundisa
iiLwimi - Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi - Tšenale ya tša Go ruta
Polelo - Buka ya Thuto ya Puo - Jenale ya Thuto ya Dipuo -
Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi - Jena?a ya u Gudisa Nyambo
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Jenale ya Thuto ya Dipuo - Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi
- Jena?a ya u Gudisa Nyambo - Jenala yo Dyondzisa
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Teaching - Ijenali yokuFundisa iLimi - Ijenali yokuFundisa
iiLwimi - Ibhuku Lokufundisa Ulimi - Tšenale ya tša Go ruta



Buyiswa M. Mini
University of Fort Hare

and

Rudolph Botha
University of Fort Hare

Attitudes towards IsiXhosa-in-Education in the Eastern Cape: advocacy for increased informedness about benefits of mother-tongue-based bilingual education and relevant legislative provisions for it.

Abstract

This paper presents a systematic review of selected studies' findings on some amaXhosa stakeholders' perspectives, attitudes and beliefs towards their mother tongue and its involvement in education in the Eastern Cape. The studies' methodologies were also briefly interrogated to determine the extent of participants' prior knowledge of and insight into, language related constitutional mandates, the language-in-education policy (LiEP) and mother tongue supported bilingual education and its benefits. The results of the reviews are combined with language related findings

from Mini's (2016) dissertation study to demonstrate the presence of adequate positivity towards isiXhosa-in-education, along with English. Data collection for the said dissertation (Mini, 2016) was by means of individual and focus group interviews, as well as limited classroom observations. Data analysis was by the qualitative thematic analysis method as expatiated by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Keywords: LiEP, bilingual educational access, comprehension, attitudinal change, culture, identity, advocacy.

1. Introduction

This article is a report of language related findings of a dissertation study completed by BM Mini in 2016, at the University of Florida, U.S.A. Titled, “Perspectives on a school’s bilingual education program in South Africa,” the study looked at a newly introduced bilingual education program in one district in South Africa’s Eastern Cape Province. The approach of the report is to combine the said dissertation findings with a review of findings as well as part of the methodology of selected studies on perceptions, views and attitudes towards isiXhosa and its involvement in education in the Eastern Cape. The purpose of the present article is to highlight evidence of a more optimistic outlook than widely held about amaXhosa’s attitude towards isiXhosa in education. The amaXhosa participants in the reviewed studies are some parents (De Klerk, 2000), high school students (Barkhuizen, 2002), university students from Fort Hare (Dalvit & De Klerk, 2009) and Rhodes Universities (Aziakpono & Bekker, 2010). The reviewed articles are referenced in the introduction of Mini’s (2016) dissertation study. These studies were selected for review because they are based in the Eastern Cape, with the aim of determining the extent of participants’ prior knowledge of, and insight into, language related constitutional mandates, the language-in-education policy (LiEP) and bilingual education’s practice and benefits. The reason is to point out that the presence or lack of the above-mentioned knowledge should be one of the variables considered when amaXhosa’s views and opinions are sought on the language-in-education issue.

2. Context

The review of studies on language attitudes in the Eastern Cape and combination with related findings of Mini’s (2016) study was prompted by the prevailing lack of understanding and limited implementation of the LiEP advocated additive bilingual education. Additive bilingual education allows learners to gain content knowledge as well as competence in English second language (ESL) with the supportive use and maintenance of their first language, usually the mother tongue (the L1) (Barnes, 2004; Heugh, 2000; Plüddemann, 2010; Escamilla & Coady, 2001).

While other factors are not discounted, alarm has been expressed over the negative effect of the neglect of indigenous primary languages in education in South Africa (Alexander, 2000, 2006; Braam, 2012; Taylor, 2002; Thwala, 2006; Young, 1995), including the Eastern Cape. The indigenous language neglect therefore badly affects the education accessibility, and thus quality (Alexander, 2006; Benson, 2005), for the majority of African students in South Africa, especially in rural and semi-urban areas (Ndandani, 2014). The English submersion education policy for grades four to twelve is seen to have a major contribution to poor literacy and English proficiency development, and to poor acquisition of content subjects knowledge (Alexander, 2000, 2006; Heugh, 2002). The dire consequence of this is perpetually poor matric results (Alexander, 2006; Thwala, 2006), particularly in the Eastern Cape. The alarm has led to advocacy for L1 based bilingual education (Koch, et al, 2008, 2009; Plüddemann, 2010) as a major form

of intervention that can help remedy the situation from a language perspective. This is because an L1 supported education involves the whole linguistic repertoires of the students as their intellectual fund and therefore tools for educational access and better academic achievement (Escamilla & Coady, 2001).

It is thus a concern that bilingual education implementation in the country and the Province, seems delayed (Heugh, 2001) through, among others, apartheid-associated skepticism (Braam, 2012; de Klerk, 2000; Thwala, 2006) as well as arguments of internationality and exclusive essentialisation of English, though these have already been refuted in writings within the country (notably, Alexander, 2000, 2006; Heugh, 2001).

The assumption held in this paper is that the much emphasized skepticism about isiXhosa in education has resulted in wide disinformation and misunderstanding of the matter, and lack of insight into the LiEP. This ignorance, in turn, has resulted in lack of knowledge, and thus neglect, of the sound educational principle of mother tongue supported education for successful content subjects and ESL knowledge acquisition (e.g. Qorro, 1999; Rabenoro, 2009; Ramadiro, 2009; Setati & Adler, 2000; Simango, 2009; Snow, 1990; Young, 1995). Its other consequence is the overlooking of the cultural richness of an L1 like isiXhosa as a strong marker of identity (Banda, 2000; Posel and Zeller, 2016), with which students enter educational institutions. Students' socio-cultural identity plays a significant role in their self-concept, and thus self-confidence. The latter two, which in turn affect learning and academic achievement, should therefore not be separated from learners' and students' intellectual functioning. This is an added reason for a closer examination of the reported amaXhosa's views in the Eastern Cape based studies, in case of possible pro-isiXhosa attitudes. Immediate and future advocacy and implementation efforts can thus be built on such positivity. By highlighting, maximization and foregrounding of any and all signs of pro-isiXhosa-in-education attitudes and attitudinal changes, this paper seeks to present perhaps a first step to addressing the language in education issue in the Province.

3. Problem statement

Despite the need felt for mother tongue-based bilingual education and documented positive outcomes of bilingual education globally, bilingual education implementation in the Eastern Cape is still at a little understood infancy stage, since its inception in schools in 2012. This is happening while many school (and university) students are still affected by the language barrier to adequate access to education, coupled with the imbalance of English-only assessment. The snail pace of implementation seems to reflect the Province's largely negative attitude towards, and serious insufficient understanding of, bilingual education. This paper's assertion is that an exposure of even a hint of positivity towards the mother tongue, and thus of some change in research reported negative attitudes (notably, De Klerk, 2000), may lead to L1-supported-education responsive action, including intensified awareness raising and advocacy for L1-based bilingual education at all levels. This in turn may lead to better understanding of bilingual education

benefits and the LiEP, as well as heightened implementation rate, for removal of the existing language barrier and improvement of educational access, for students' benefit at all levels.

4. Methodology and conceptual framework

The main dissertation study was a constructivist–interpretivist (Creswell & Miller, 2000) qualitative research. The study explored stakeholder perspectives on various aspects of the newly introduced mother tongue based bilingual education (MTBBE) program, using one school as the main research site (pseudo-named Mzamo primary School, thus MPS), and another for limited triangulation (pseudo-named Siyazama Primary School, (SPS)). The education district was given the pseudonym, BD-1 (short for Bilingual District 1).

Data were collected by means of eleven (11) individual and two (2) focus group interviews, as well as classroom observations. Employing aspects of language policy and planning (LPP) as theoretical framework (Ruiz, 1984; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Baldauf, 2006; & Posel and Zeller, 2016), data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method as expatiated by Braun & Clarke (2006).

As the authors point out, this kind of inductive analytic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) leads to an accurate representation of the entire data set's content through accurate identification, coding and analysis of themes that reflect all the data, keeping a clear distinction and connection between the emic voices of the participants and the etic voice of the analyst and interpreter. The method was fitting to the inquiry into the "... under-researched area, [and] ... with participants whose views on the topic are not known" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 11), a description fitting the then unknown views of the MPS-associated participants.

A limitation of the methodology was the non-inclusion of the learners themselves, as beneficiaries of the program, whereas their views would result in a fuller picture of all stakeholders' views and perspectives.

Bias in the dissertation research was possible owing to researcher positioning in favour of bilingual education as a major intervention to curb lack of educational access resulting from language barrier. It was possible also as a result of the limited choice of the research sites and participants, which was due, in part, to the newness of the MTBBE program. It was, however, circumvented by the choice of the constructivist–interpretivist approach to the inquiry, as a result of which the knowledge sought and interpreted was co-constructed with the participants. My main role as co-creator of knowledge with the participants was to focus on data-grounded analysis, description and interpretation of the findings. A clear audit trail was given in the main dissertation study.

5. Ethical Considerations

Participants' voluntary participation with informed consent, freedom of withdrawal, as well as confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were ensured. All publications consulted have been acknowledged.

6. Literature review: bilingual education definition and programme types.

Since proper understanding and meaningful implementation of bilingual education is the issue around which arguments in the paper revolve, this paper presents a brief, focused literature review (Feak & Swales, 2009) on definition of bilingual education and its models and program types. In terms of its different models and various program types under each model, the studied literature is mostly from North America where most research on bilingual education and the issue of L1 assisted education has been done. A few references are made to the context of Africa. Simply defined, bilingual education is learning in two languages (Garcia, 2005). Depending on goals and ideological orientations, bilingual education has been defined under various models and program types (Freeman, 1998; Zimmerman, 2010). The three models so distinguished (Freeman, 1998, referencing Hornberger, 1991) are the transitional, maintenance, and enrichment models. Our interest in the present paper is in a combination of the maintenance and enrichment models under which program goals are to maintain students' primary languages, strengthen their cultural identity, affirm their civil rights, while their learning of content subjects and English second language (ESL) is supported by the use of their L1. Dual-language or two-way bilingual programs are the most common enrichment programs in the United States. Leading as they do to good academic performance (Collier & Thomas, 2014), such language-as-resource oriented programs (Ruiz, 1984) are also amenable to social justice and respect of all languages (Freeman, 1998), and thus most suited to the context of South Africa and the Eastern Cape Province.

Two good program examples within Africa and South Africa can be mentioned. One was Nigeria's Ford Foundation-funded Ile-Ife Six-Year Primary Project (ISYPP) (Omoniyi, 2007: 543). Though it ended when the funding stopped, it had showed the effectiveness of a late-exit (after 6 years) mother tongue-based additive bilingual education (Alexander, 2006; Obondo, 2008; Omoniyi, 2007). In South Africa, in the Eastern Cape, the only bilingual education documented between isiXhosa and English is a late exit additive model in which students would be taught in their L1 for the first six years of their schooling, with English introduced at the third grade as a learning area, and incrementally (Koch, et al, 2008; 2009). This pseudo-named Plasini School, in Mini's (2016) dissertation study. Although the program was discontinued, its lasting significance is that it illustrated the need and possibility for opening up of spaces for the implementation of bilingual education for the isiXhosa-speaking learners in the Eastern Cape. It was also the impetus to further language planning and policy (LPP)

activities in the Province that led to the current mother tongue based bilingual education (MTBBE) in some primary and junior secondary schools in the Province.

With this brief but global and local exposition of bilingual education as well as its existing models and program types, the review of the selected studies mentioned in this paper's methodology section was undertaken.

7. The review of selected studies

Selected for the systematic review were four studies that report perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of some isiXhosa speaking parents (De Klerk, 2000), high school students (Barkhuizen, 2002), and university students (Dalvit & de Klerk, 2009; Aziakpono & Bekker, 2010) towards isiXhosa and English in education. The review followed some of the steps of systematic review described by the Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology (the CCACE), [accessed on 11 June 2017]. Briefly, a summary of the review can be stated under the following subheadings:

- 7.1 Review of the selected studies' methodologies;
- 7.2 Review of the selected studies' statements of findings; and
- 7.3 The dissertation findings related to changed language attitudes.

7.1. Review of the methodologies of the selected articles

The methodologies (and findings) of three of the four selected articles were reviewed systematically. Owing to ceased online availability, Barkhuizen's (2002) study could not be revisited for the current paper. Of importance and relevance to the current paper is that the study examined the perceptions of isiXhosa speaking high school students in the Eastern Cape about the role of and status of the two languages in their school curriculum, namely isiXhosa as a first language and English as a second language. Because the paper's methodology and findings were not unlike those of the other papers, reference to it is maintained in the current article, as it had been studied for the main dissertation study before.

The methodologies of the selected studies were systematically reviewed with the aim to determine the participants' level of informedness under four considerations, namely, (i) participants' knowledge (or empowerment therewith) of the existing constitutional language provisions and mandate for the development of African languages to the same par as English and Afrikaans; (ii) participants' knowledge (or empowerment therewith) of the LiEP's provisions, including bilingual education; (iii) participants' knowledge (or empowerment therewith) of bilingual education and its educational

benefits; and (iv) participants' awareness (or empowerment with the knowledge) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE)'s call to universities to develop and intellectualise the province-based official African languages.

The methodologies review yielded no information that participants possessed, or had been empowered with, any substantial knowledge deemed in this paper to be important for sufficiently informed responses to survey and interview questions in the various studies. All the studies mention such background information in their introductory sections, but report no direct effort to empower their participants therewith before the surveys or interviews as a means of ensuring that participants and researchers were on the same par with regards to understanding of these issues. Notwithstanding, some of Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study's questionnaire and interview questions mention the constitutional and language policy provisions that favour the non-marginalization of African languages and, thus, of isiXhosa in the case of the Eastern Cape. Judging by the considerably high percentage of positive attitudes towards isiXhosa reported in the study, this inclusion seems to have enhanced the state of informedness of the participants. Thus we believe that they moved from a point of less disinformation as a result of these questions' awareness raising (though indirect).

With regards to understanding of bilingual education, Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study reports a misunderstanding of the term, dual-medium university by all participants, seemingly taking it to mean a university in which two languages are spoken, instead of a university that teaches in two languages. This misunderstanding is a clear evidence of the typical mistaking of the monolingual learning of two languages as separate subjects for bilingual education in South Africa. Nothing illustrates the little knowledge of bilingual education in the country and in the Eastern Cape better than this seemingly minute, but supremely significant part of the study's findings report.

All in all, we do not know what the participants' responses might have been, had they been aware that they were now living in a dispensation of linguistic liberation and constitutional language rights. We can only assume from the facts revealed by the review of the findings that the impact of sufficient and deeper knowledge of the existing constitutional language provisions could have been more and better knowledgeable expressions of pro-isiXhosa-in-education beliefs and attitudes.

7.2. Interrogation of statements of findings in the reviewed articles

The enquiry into the findings was to detect any emically or etically evident amount of knowledge about the constitutional language mandates for the development of African languages, the LiEP and bilingual education. The emic evidence (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) was in each case the researcher's report of what the participants said and how they said it. The current paper focuses more on this aspect in order to detect and zoom out, as it were, any amount of positive attitudes towards isiXhosa participants' responses. The etic evidence (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) consisted of the ways in which the

researchers interpreted what the participants said. This aspect was given considerable attention too, with the specific aim of pointing out, highlighting and foregrounding any positivity statement in the researchers' interpretations.

7.2.1 Completion of Questionnaires: participant percentage and language used

Aziakpono & Bekker (2010) report that 23% of the isiXhosa students completed the questionnaires in isiXhosa and 77% in English. For the writers this was an indication that more isiXhosa students were comfortable in English than those who were comfortable in their L1. However, another interpretation in this regard could easily be that the choice of English rather than isiXhosa was driven by the prestige with which English is held compared to the still low status accorded to isiXhosa. This is a legacy of both colonial and apartheid thinking paradigms.

In Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study, participants represented about 10% of the total isiXhosa-speaking students at the University of Fort Hare (UFH) at the time. The study reports a total response, i.e. of the returned questionnaires, of 23 %. Their explanation for this apparently low return of questionnaires is, among others, that some of the UFH's isiXhosa speaking students were [probably] not used to being involved in research surveys - an interpretation that reflects the reality that because most isiXhosa-speaking students do not live in urban areas, they are not always reached by researchers to serve as convenience samples. It is possible therefore that this lack of exposure to, and experience of, being research participants might have led to them not seeing any importance in prioritizing voluntary filling of questionnaires over their studies.

Regarding the choice of language, a considerable number in Aziakpono & Bekker's (2010) study, and a greater majority of students in Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study filled the respective questionnaires in isiXhosa. This no doubt shows that isiXhosa students at both universities do have pride in their language, and a sufficient number of them still know it, compared to those who claim to encounter difficulties with the language. This is a situation to be foregrounded in this and other studies on language development and L1 infusion into education at all levels.

Aziakpono & Bekker's (2010) report of the need for the use of isiXhosa expressed by participants from former DET schools, is an indication of a very serious need for such students at all levels of education in the Eastern Cape. Another factor to consider is that many will come back to render services to predominantly isiXhosa speaking communities in this predominantly isiXhosa speaking Province. Therefore, Aziakpono & Bekker's (2010) finding that Eastern Cape's former DET students expressed a need for their L1's infusion in their university education could not be more essential to highlight for advocacy for L1 based bilingual education at all levels, in the Province. The purpose to keep in mind is the promotion of equitable access to quality education (Qorro, 2009) for all students, for the improvement of academic performance and, in turn, pass rates, especially at matric and at universities in the Eastern Cape.

In de Klerk's (2000) article there is no mention of choice of language in the completion of questionnaires and responses to interviews. All evidence is that the research was conducted in English only, as isiXhosa speaking participants' responses quoted are in English. Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) paper is a considerable improvement in this regard as it demonstrates high regard for isiXhosa's importance as its speakers' L1 and as the predominantly spoken official language in the Province.

7.2.2 Attitudes Towards English-Only LoLT

To the question about the English-only LoLT policy of Rhodes University, Aziakpono & Bekker (2010) report, among other things, a clear acknowledgement by the isiXhosa-speaking students of the disadvantage of the use of English only as a language of learning and teaching at the university. The acknowledgement points at the often not tackled problem of language barrier to (adequate) access to education, and to the marginalization of students' L1s as part of their linguistic repertoire for access to equitable and quality education at tertiary level as well.

However, the authors quickly add the caveat that there was ambivalence regarding the issue with English-only LoLT at Rhodes University. This ambivalence towards favoring English hegemony, together with the reported usual arguments that are made to minimize isiXhosa's importance as an official language and a language of education together with English, is a poignant indicator of the situation that is well captured in Alexander's (2000) paper, aptly titled thus, "English unassailable but unattainable: the dilemma of language policy in South African education." The preoccupation with the idealised and essentialised internationality and hegemony of English continues to limit educational access for many learners and students. It is vital that education be made adequately accessible to them by the full and action-proven recognition of their L1 isiXhosa in education and assessment. There is considerable research, globally, that supports this best-practice educational principle.

This makes it all the more essential that the attitudes that point at positivity towards the language be maximized, despite their juxtaposition with expressions of views that promote, support, and encourage English hegemony, thus leading to continued marginalization of isiXhosa and the vicious cycle of poor academic performance and achievement, well represented by the poor matric results in the Province in successive years. The positive attitude expressions towards isiXhosa, however minimally stated or reported, must be noticed as important foundation upon which to build further advocacy for, and increased implementation of, isiXhosa language use in the education of its speakers, alongside, and ultimately at equal par with, English.

Among the perceptions of English reported in Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study is that English is a language for tertiary education (24 % of participants). This perception is because of the current, constitutionally non-compliant, largely monolingual policy in higher education in Eastern Cape's universities. Nevertheless, it needs to change as the universities and all educational institutions, like all public life, should reflect the non-

monolingual nature of this province (and the country). This is a matter of equity as well as ensuring educational equality (Benson, 2005; Qorro, 2009), as well as social justice (Freeman, 1998).

In another finding, the majority of Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study participants expressed pride in their own isiXhosa-oriented pronunciation when speaking English to English speakers. The question of accent is of relevance because of its exposition of an important, deep-seated positive attitude towards isiXhosa as a highly regarded marker of their identity, one many amaXhosa are not prepared to look down upon. This is an attitude that sends the strong message that we hear frequently, despite not being published as much as the opposite one of shying away from, or sacrificing, the isiXhosa language. This is the same attitude and message that some parents in de Klerk's (2000) study echoed, where they are reported to have expressed conservatism towards the language as part of their non-alienable culture and identity. It is also echoed in Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009: 62) study where 57% of isiXhosa speaking UFH students said isiXhosa was important because "it is the language of my people." Identity and cultural association of language are part of the wholeness students come to education with, and therefore part of their intellectual functioning. Their importance should thus be accorded the status of being a high domain of use for the language (Posel & Zeller, 2016), despite its non-commercial recognition. The practice / attitude of deficit profiling them, and thus the language concerned, as low level domains, should be revised in the predominantly pro-western and pro-anglicization research and attitudes in education and related fields at large.

The view taken in this paper is that the identity-prestige attitude must be encouraged so that students who need education that is supported by the use of their L1 should not feel inferior. They must be able to take pride in learning in their language, as in the case where teachers in Mini's (2016) dissertation reported that the learners were happy to realize that they could study such highly rated subjects as maths and science in their mother tongue. Use of their whole linguistic repertoire reduces the linguistic and attendant cultural overload students experience when learning only in a second language. It also lowers the affective filter (Krashen, 1983) that otherwise causes non-participation in class because of difficulty to learn a second language, or in a second language.

In support of this view reference may be made to research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) which problematizes the use of normative terms like native speaker (NS) proficiency, etc., when referring to the learning of English by speakers of other languages. This trend of literature began with Firth & Wagner's (1997) paper that argued against the expectation that a second language learner must reach a target level of competence the norm for which was/is the "competence of an idealized native speaker (NS)" (1997:1). Comprehensible communication as output (i.e. production, performance by students) following after, first, comprehensible input (teaching) must be the goal, and not any linguistically and culturally overloaded approach.

7.2.3 Attitudes towards isiXhosa in education

It is interesting to note that when the question on beliefs and attitudes was asked from the point of view of English, ambivalence is reported among the isiXhosa speaking students even though they did admit to being disadvantaged by the use of English-only as a LOLT at Rhodes University. However, when the question was from the point of view of isiXhosa, the picture became different. High percentages are reported in attitudes and beliefs that favour the development of isiXhosa as a university language of learning and teaching alongside Afrikaans and English (65% of participants), the desire for isiXhosa definitions of technical terms in courses in the various departments (56%), use of isiXhosa in discussions in tutorials (53%), that isiXhosa translations and discussions would improve their understanding of courses (50%), and that tutors should be able to speak isiXhosa (61%). These quite high pro-isiXhosa percentages are another sufficient ground for the implementation of the constitutional mandate to develop African languages, and thus isiXhosa and improve its status in the eyes of its speakers and of, at least, all those involved in education at all levels, including tertiary level.

Also significant to note is the fact that students, even if in the minority among fellow participants, admit that knowledge of isiXhosa will enable them to find certain jobs (Barkhuizen, 2002; Dalvit & de Klerk, 2009) at least in places where services would be rendered in isiXhosa speaking communities. The jobs-related finding is one of the views to expand on and to use as basis for affirming positive attitudes towards isiXhosa, instead of overshadowing them by emphasizing the negative views.

It is clear therefore that there are again enough positive attitudes among isiXhosa speaking students for the use of isiXhosa alongside English in certain areas at university, especially the most difficult courses (Dalvit & de Klerk, 2009; Aziakpono & Bekker, 2010). This is a clear indication for the need for isiXhosa-English bilingual education in higher education as well in the Eastern Cape.

In addition, in Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) study, it is reported that 58% of the participants said that isiXhosa was important because it is an official language. This reported response speaks of awareness of the official status of isiXhosa as a language in the country and the Province. The response supports the current paper's argument for the need for relevant knowledge of today's language issues for participants of studies on language beliefs and attitudes. The response is significant also because it could be an impetus for further change of attitudes in favour of the infusion of isiXhosa in education.

Using the term, "dual-mediumship" rather than bilingual education, but in reality referring to the same thing, Dalvit & de Klerk's (2009) finding was that 59% of the participants were in favor. Again, this is another near overwhelming evidence for positive attitudes towards isiXhosa-English bilingual education at the UFH. Overall, in spite of some ambivalence, "... 65 % of students agreed that using both English and isiXhosa in the exams would help them overcome problems" (Dalvit & de Klerk, 2009: 69). This appeal definitely applies as well to the majority of the Eastern Cape Province's primary and high school, particularly matric, students.

The positive consequences that participants anticipated if Fort Hare would become a bilingual education (dual-medium) university were that more isiXhosa speaking students would have access to university education (32%), UFH students would have better understanding of their courses (38%) and that their English knowledge and proficiency levels would not be affected (26%). The latter statement is support for the worldwide research that shows that even second language acquisition is enhanced by the use of students' L1s in its learning and teaching.

The positivity of attitudes towards isiXhosa here, as well as the challenge for the universities to act responsively, is self-evident.

7.3. Findings in the main dissertation study that reflect attitudinal changes

One of the related findings of the study is reported under the following theme: Initiation of the MTBBE program. This finding demonstrates the change of attitudes towards isiXhosa in in the Eastern Cape that led to the opening of spaces (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) for the implementation of the current mother tongue based bilingual education (MTBBE) program in the Province. Captured in the language planning and policy (LPP) concept of the metaphoric LPP onion (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), all levels of the society (departmental, district, local school and individual levels) are mirrored in the finding as agents of the change and implementers of the LiEP in the Eastern Cape. The predominant spirit reflected in this finding and others, is that of determination to take the language issue bull by its horns for at least the benefit of the young learners in the intermediate phase (IP) of education in the Province. This changes the gloomy picture painted in some of the literature of some isiXhosa participants desiring a shift from isiXhosaness to *Englishness* (e.g. de Klerk, 2000).

Another result reveals that all the stakeholders associated with the MTBBE, from the highest departmental level to the local, school level, had a language-as a-resource-attitude (Ruiz, 1984) towards isiXhosa and English, equally. The aspects in which the resource orientation is evident include accepting translanguaging (for which see, among others, Canagarajah, 2011; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011) as classroom practice; the employment of a structured use of L1 and L2 in assessment; status equalization of the isiXhosa L1 to that of English L2; and, very importantly, a measure of understanding of bilingual education and its benefits as experienced locally. The equalization of the status of isiXhosa to that of English in the program changed the hegemonic outlook towards English, at least in the district and the local schools visited for the dissertation research. These changed attitudes, beliefs and insights illustrate, together with the positive beliefs and attitudes expressed by participants in the reviewed articles, the possibility of employing isiXhosa in education for educational access and academic improvement at all levels of education from primary to tertiary levels.

Another result shows that the MTBBE was seen as an educational reform (meeting an educational need and as an attempt at the resolution of the language-as-problem

(Ruiz, 1984) situation that has been created by the mainstream education policy of English-only LoLT. This can be regarded as a prophecy-come-true of those parents who expressed, as early as 2000, the wish that isiXhosa be included as part of the good education they desired for their children (de Klerk, 2000).

This domain and status planning for isiXhosa by its major use in the bilingual program was seen as a boost for the learners' self-confidence and affirmation of their identity as L1 speakers of isiXhosa. Research shows that involvement of student's own language and other identity markers, in their education might largely has a positive effect in their enthusiasm to learn and thus in their academic performance and achievement (Lee, 2002; Posel & Zeller, 2016). Lack of such inclusion might have an opposite effect (Cummins, 1979).

The L1-L2 status equalization boosted the status and prestige of the isiXhosa language in the eyes of the parents interviewed for Mini's (2016) dissertation study. In the participants' expressed views and understanding, one of the goals of the MTBBE is that children must develop a sense of value for their language as a language in which they can learn important subjects, and in which they can think and develop intellectually. In terms of this view therefore, the MTBBE is seen as constituting the beginnings of intellectualization of isiXhosa as an African language (Braam, 2012). It is commendable that some universities, like Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape and University of KwaZulu-Natal in the KZN Province, have already taken up the baton.

Important also is the finding that teachers in the programme were (and still are) given continual training and support for materials development for the bilingual education, including accurate translation. Other plans were in place for further LTMs development, printing and publication. This stands in stark contrast with the report of one of the Aziakpono & Bekker's (2010) participants who claimed lack of terminology and reported rejection of a proposed maths dictionary project (presumably in her area, only). Another fact contradicting this participant's claim is that multilingual materials have been produced under the aegis of the Pan South African Language Board and the national Language Service section of the national Department of Arts and Culture since 1996 (personal knowledge as one of those involved for a long time). Thus the process of corpus planning (Baldauf, 2004) continues for a language that is very well developed in terms of other aspects of corpus planning like orthography, lexicography, grammars, literary works and terminology of various kinds. So, the increased domain of isiXhosa in education in the Eastern Cape's BD-1 District, has not been hindered by any dire need for graphicization.

All the aspects of status, domain and prestige planning for the language, isiXhosa, happened contrary to the views some hold that African languages cannot handle math and other scientific subjects. The status and prestige planning for isiXhosa that the MTBBE program has led to, in the views of stakeholders, are important also in view of the skepticism reported in some research studies (e.g. De Klerk, 2000) in relation to education based on isiXhosa, the major language of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Another finding in the main dissertation study was that teachers at the MPS expressed the view that the program had a chance to continue because they and the children were benefitting from its implementation. Additional importance of the finding about the high possibility of the program's continuation lies in the expressed hope of its continued expansion up to Grade 12 and beyond. This ties in with the students' positive attitudes towards learning in isiXhosa as well at Fort Hare (Dalvit & de Klerk, 2009) and at Rhodes University (Aziakpono & Bekker, 2010). It also, again, supports the parents who expressed a similar wish for isiXhosa in the education of their children (de Klerk, 2000).

It is also significant to note that the Eastern Cape became the first province in the entire country to implement a fairly large-scale bilingual education between an African language, isiXhosa, and English. The Province also became the first to establish a Language-in-Education-Policy (LiEP) Unit in the country in fulfillment of the National Language Policy Framework of 2003 (Beukes, 2008). These findings are important for use in continued awareness outreaches and advocacy for isiXhosa-English education.

To be informed is to be empowered. Another finding of the main dissertation study was that the attitudes of the participants had changed, as the participants narrated. Even among those who were most skeptical about the program at the beginning, the change took place gradually. One of the teachers related that during advocacy and orientation meetings, they were reminded by provincial and district officials of the fact that by employing code switching in their teaching, they were actually doing bilingual education, except when it came to assessment. Assessment was always in English only, thus lacking in assessment validity (cf Escamilla & Coady, 2001). With the MTBBE program, they were being given a legal right to practice code switching, in such a structured way as to include assessment. Like translanguaging, code switching is an accepted bilingual education strategy (Becker, 2001; Sert, 2005; Setati, 1998; Setati & Adler, 2000). So, the teachers' attitudes changed, and they embraced the mother tongue based bilingual education (MTBBE) program.

Likewise, the parents' focus group expressed satisfaction with the promotion and use of isiXhosa without the exclusion of English, as one of their responses was,

“IsiXhosa esi siyafuneka NesiNgesi.” [‘The isiXhosa language is necessary. Together with English’]. This is evidence that with proper information about the importance of L1 based bilingual education and related constitutional provisions, significant change in attitudes towards isiXhosa supported bilingual teaching, learning and assessment for all grades and levels (including grade 12 and tertiary, with choice) can be a possibility.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, two of the many possible implications of the current paper's discussions and revelations are important to state for follow-up and action. The first implication is that information-based changed attitudes need to be targeted for employing isiXhosa (and

Sesotho) in additive and full bilingual education. Radical advocacy in the Eastern Cape is urgent as one of the major interventions for improving education quality generally, particularly matric results. The university-based studies are of particular importance because they provide an answer to the general question that comes from an anti-isiXhosa stance: How will these children learn at university as English-only is the LoLT in institutions of higher learning? Studies like Aziakpono & Bekker's (2010) article help to highlight the need for universities to heed the constitution's mandates and LiEP's provisions for the utilization of isiXhosa in the education of the language's speakers.

For university language departments in the Eastern Cape, especially for the upliftment of the teaching of isiXhosa and advanced intellectualisation of the language (Prah, 2009) at university, one of the implications is that language studies must include all relevant information about use of language in society (sociolinguistics), and about the politics behind language use (language planning and policy, LPP for short), as well as related research. These and other language related fields offer valuable intellectual insights. Among such insights is the understanding that language policies and implementation plans are rarely or never objective, value free phenomena. Very often they are driven for the fulfillment of someone's agenda.

It is equally important that pre- and in-service teachers acquire the said knowledge and insights. This is because, among other reasons, teachers get to be unconscious implementors of language policies (Shohamy, 2006). They must therefore be educated about LPP and its education-relevant issues and concepts (Throop, 2007).

Specifically and of immediate importance, bilingual education definition and models and program types should be part of the curriculum in both language departments and teacher education faculties at tertiary institutions. This is because many people who major in the language end up in education-related careers of one or another type.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Buyiswa M. Mini

Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Department of African Languages,
University of Fort Hare, Private bag X1314, Alice. E.C.

Email: bmini@ufh.ac.za, bmmini@ufh.ac.za

Buyiswa M. Mini did her first degree, University Education Diploma (UED) and honours at the University of Fort Hare, Alice, Eastern Cape, S.A. She obtained a Masters degree in Linguistics from Reading University, UK. and her Doctorate in Education (Ed.D) from the University of Florida, USA. Her professional experience includes teaching at a high school, lecturing at the University of Fort Hare and directing the university's dictionary centre now called The IsiXhosa National Lexicography Unit. She also has extensive experience in teaching isiXhosa and isiZulu as foreign languages in the U.S. and at home. As a student in the ESOL Bilingual Bicultural Education Program at the University of Florida, she was

recipient of the 2012-2013 Dr. Clemons Lester Hallman Fellowship award. She attained the Doctor of Education degree in the ESOL-Bilingual-Bicultural Education program at the School of Teaching and Learning, at the College of Education at the University of Florida. Her research interests include language policy and planning (LPP) which includes language-in-education policy (LiEP), bi-/multilingual education, (socio-) linguistics, lexicography, second language acquisition, and African language development including translation, terminology creation, and literature. All by the grace of the Lord.

Rudolph Botha

Adjunct-Professor, Department of African Languages, University of Fort Hare
Private bag X1314, Alice. E.C.

Email: cbotha@ufh.ac.za

Rudolph Botha completed his studies in African Languages at the University of Stellenbosch. His doctoral degree studies focused on a theoretical study of the narratological aspects of the Xhosa novel. He lectured at the University of Stellenbosch, before he accepted a position as Professor of African Languages at the University of Fort Hare. As a staff member of the University, he served as Head of the Department of African Languages for several years. He also served as Director of the School of Humanities as well as Acting Dean of the Faculty of African and Democracy Studies. He was a member of various University committees and he served as Chairperson of the Council Language Committee. He has presented papers at various national and international conferences and has published articles in accredited and non-accredited academic journals. Professor Botha has extensive experience in the teaching of isiXhosa (first language) at undergraduate and Honours level. At postgraduate level, he has supervised the work of several Master's and Doctoral candidates to completion. He also has extensive experience in the teaching of isiXhosa as a foreign language at the international level. Over the past ten years, he has taught various courses at the University of Bayreuth in Bayreuth, Germany and has also been invited to offer courses at the University of Cologne in Germany. Professor Botha has accepted an appointment as Adjunct-Professor at the University of Fort Hare His research interests include language policy and planning (LPP) which includes language-in-education policy (LiEP), second language acquisition and African language development including translation and interpreting, orthographic studies and literature.

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