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Students' motivation for studying isiZulu first language modules at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Abstract

This article presents findings of a study conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Department of African Languages on the motivation of isiZulu first language (L1) undergraduate students for studying isiZulu first language modules. In this paper, we postulate that students' motivation for learning an African language in the South African context is a result of multiple variables that relate to relevance and socio cultural implications of the concerned language, and the effects of the pervasiveness of English in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of life. Understanding student motivation for studying African languages as L1 is vital as an additional measure in transforming curricula in order to satisfy the multilingual needs

of the global world by enforcing additive bilingualism that embraces African languages. Questionnaires were used, and the responses were analysed thematically to determine students' motivation to enrol for isiZulu modules. The findings of the study reveal intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, among them, the use of isiZulu for teaching and learning, cultural affiliation and identity, career trajectories, peer and/or family pressure and a poor selection, or a lack of course alternatives.

Keywords: language learning motivation; extrinsic motivation; intrinsic motivation; status of African languages; bilingual policy.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to understand the underlying factors that have motivated a significant number of students to enrol in first language isiZulu courses in the Department of African Languages at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). In particular, the study sought to determine whether the motivation to learn isiZulu L1 was intrinsic or extrinsic. The current situation in the discipline of isiZulu is in contrast to that of the past, when the number of students taking African language courses dwindled in line with a trend in all universities in Southern Africa (Matsinhe, 2004). While in some universities the number of students taking African languages has remained low, the number of students taking isiZulu modules at UKZN, particularly across schools in the college of humanities, has increased sharply since 2014 when an English-isiZulu bilingual policy was enforced (Ndebele and Zulu, 2017).

The implementation of the language policy that recognised isiZulu was not only a constitutional imperative to embrace South African multilingualism but was also a move to decolonise the University and to do what was right by acknowledging the KwaZulu-Natal Province as a predominantly isiZulu-speaking region. Furthermore, isiZulu speakers constitute the largest part of the population of South Africa. According to *Statistics South Africa* (2011), 22.7% of South Africa's over 50 million inhabitants speak isiZulu as their first language. In KwaZulu-Natal, two-thirds of the population, which translates to more than 7.9 million people (78%), speak isiZulu as their first language (*Statistics South Africa*, 2011). The 2014 Language Policy commits UKZN to developing and promoting bilingual proficiency in English and isiZulu, with English serving as the primary language of instruction. IsiZulu is being developed as a medium of instruction in line with the spirit of promoting additive bilingualism. Furthermore, proficiency in isiZulu is considered vital for social cohesion and effective communication between students and the majority of the KwaZulu-Natal population (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2014).

As a language policy implementation strategy, UKZN has three language of instruction models namely, the English only model, the English-isiZulu parallel model and the isiZulu-only model (for a detailed discussion of these models, see Ndebele and Zulu, 2017). The isiZulu-only model, which is the focus of this study, encompasses isiZulu modules listed under 28(a) in the *College of Humanities Brochure* (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2018). The 28(a) isiZulu modules are taken by students whose primary language is isiZulu or any language in the South African Nguni language group. The isiZulu-only model has been instrumental in promoting the status of an African language, isiZulu, as a language of academic discourse. This is in contrast with the English-only model that is viewed not only as a social violation of language rights in a democratic country, but also as a failure by postcolonial governments to redress past linguistic injustice, and a travesty of linguistic rights (Ndebele and Zulu, 2017).

In Africa, there is a need to understand the motivational dynamics that surround the learning of African languages. There is an overall lack of research dedicated

to understanding the motivation for studying indigenous African languages at the university level in Africa in the context of the dominance of ex-colonial languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Spanish (see studies in Wolff, 2017). The inclination is that where there are powerful languages of the economy, law, government and education, speakers of indigenous languages forsake these oppressed languages and learn the dominant languages in order to have a competitive edge in employment prospects. Drawing from the literature, the paper accentuates that students' motivation to learn isiZulu is a result of multiple variables that relate to relevance and socio-cultural implications of the concerned language, and the effects of the pervasiveness of English in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of life. Table 1 shows the increase in student enrolment numbers for isiZulu undergraduate courses in both major and elective courses at the Howard campus of UKZN from 2014 to 2018 against the low enrolment numbers from 2005 to 2009 in Table 2.

Table 1: High student enrolment numbers

Module code	Subject	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
ZULM101	Introduction to IsiZulu A	614	757	599	549	557
ZULM102	Introduction to IsiZulu B	693	569	420	353	350
ZULM105	Academic Writing	483	602	687	731	697
ZULM106	Semiotics of African Cosmology	96	104	132	111	60
ZULM201	Advanced IsiZulu A	172	259	287	273	289
ZULM202	Advanced IsiZulu B	143	191	224	188	203
ZULM203	Heritage and Culture	257	338	399	348	211
ZULM204	Translation and Interpreting 1	31	31	38	36	35
ZULM301	Sociolinguistics and Language Planning	69	52	101	148	112
ZULM303	Onomastics and Semantics	62	55	97	142	86
ZULM304	IsiZulu Modern Prose and Drama	62	52	99	140	116
ZULM305	Traditional and Modern Poetry	36	27	64	87	90

Table 2: Low student enrolment numbers

Module code	Subject	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
ZULM101	Introduction to IsiZulu A	53	77	108	155	212
ZULM102	Introduction to IsiZulu B	91	90	95	119	177
ZULM105	Academic Writing	9	27	48	89	89
ZULM106	Semiotics of African Cosmology	12	38	52	109	151
ZULM201	Advanced IsiZulu A	23	18	31	38	51
ZULM202	Advanced IsiZulu B	8	22	40	31	47
ZULM203	Heritage and Culture	22	56	97	132	159
ZULM204	Translation and Interpreting 1		18	29	39	41
ZULM301	Sociolinguistics and Language Planning	6	3	19	25	25
ZULM303	Onomastics and Semantics	6		7	15	22
ZULM304	IsiZulu Modern Prose and Drama	3	5	8	15	17
ZULM305	Traditional and Modern Poetry	3	7	13	21	19

We discuss, below, the literature on the motivation to learn a language. We start with the literature on learning a language in Western situations where the learners come from outside the linguistic environments and are often, if not always, immersed. Then we move to situations in the African context and focus on the literature about African children learning African languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is described as the force that controls and influences human behaviour (Steers and Porter, 1991). Being motivated means to have the drive to do something. That is, a person who is not motivated is not driven to initiate something, while a motivated individual will have the push to do it (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Dörnyei, 2003a). In relation to language learning, Dörnyei (2005: 68) defines motivation as the “effort, desire, and attitude towards

learning". While some scholars have distinguished between the concepts of motivation and attitude (Widodo, Ariyani and Setiyadi, 2018), it is important to highlight that students who have strong language learning motivation (LLM) possess a positive attitude towards language learning and put great effort into mastering concepts with a clear goal and desire. Consequently, these students acquire better language proficiency (Long, Ming and Chen, 2013). Motivation is therefore a significant issue in language learning as research has consistently shown that it is a determiner of success or lack thereof in the language learning process (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008; Espinar and Ortega, 2015).

In Africa, there seems to be little interest in researching students' motivation for studying their first languages (L1s) at institutions of higher education, a worrying factor that the current investigation attempts to address. Since the 1990s, African students have lost interest in studying their L1s (Matsinhe, 2004; Brock-Utne, 2010; Mbatha, 2013; Olivier, 2014). Brock-Utne (2010) observed serious loss of student interest in studying their L1s in Namibia, where there was an initiative by the National Institute for Educational Development to increase the number of students taking African languages by establishing a Higher Diploma in African Languages at the University of Namibia (UNAM). However, the programme aroused very little interest. Brock-Utne (2010: 637-638) reports that "while in 1995 there were 100 students taking Oshindonga as a subject at UNAM, five years later, in the academic years 1999–2000, there was only one student taking an African language at the diploma level at UNAM".

One of the few studies on understanding the drive for studying indigenous languages at university level in Africa is one undertaken by Mbatha (2013). The study aimed to find out why black African students were either determined or not determined to choose isiZulu modules as a non-primary language at the Edgewood campus of UKZN. The study found that students studied isiZulu in order to learn an African language because they needed an additional language and not because it was a university requirement. In the study, some students reported the need for two African languages as their main motivation for taking isiZulu. Developing pride in the language was also reported as one of the motives for choosing the modules.

Students who did not register for the isiZulu modules reported feelings of unhappiness, fear, anxiety and being ashamed of making mistakes as demotivating factors with regard to taking the isiZulu courses (Mbatha, 2013).

Matsinhe's (2004) study conducted in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries found that "policy issues, and training issues, publication, lack of programmes for electronic media, and coordination and consultation issues were the main hindrances for the promotion of African languages in institutions of higher education" (Matsinhe, 2004: 13). It was also established that, as a result of low motivation, teaching and learning in indigenous African languages in most African universities were almost non-existent, and that student enrolment was low and characterised by high dropout rates. The main reason cited for the low enrolment numbers in African languages at institutions of higher education was a lack of interest among African students in learning their home languages (Matsinhe, 2004).

A number of scholars in South Africa have highlighted some reasons for the lack of interest in studying African languages at higher education institutions. Of particular importance to highlight is the attitude and perception of students, parents and academics, that these languages are terminologically deficient and that English is the only language suitable for academic discourse (De Klerk, 2000; Heugh, 2000; Barkhuizen, 2001). Student perceptions of and prejudice against African languages still persist (see studies by Millar and Barris, 2017; Ngcobo, 2017; Rodrigues and Abrams, 2017; Sebolai, 2017). For example, a study by Millar and Barris (2017) investigated negative attitudes of isiXhosa language students in the Department of Clothing and Textile Technology at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The students were provided with Harvard referencing guides in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English, and they rejected the document written in their primary language (isiXhosa) and preferred the one written in English (Millar and Barris, 2017). Millar and Barris (2017: 7) found that the “students felt reluctant to use the [isiXhosa document] because English is the LoLT [language of learning and teaching]” and because English had been to them the language of education throughout most of their school careers. Students also rejected the document because “their lecturers did not speak nor understand” isiXhosa and because the material written in isiXhosa had been translated into ‘deep isiXhosa’, and was therefore “associated with the past and with [a] rural society” (Millar and Barris, 2017: 7). Wolff (2017) argues that the persistence of such views in opposition to teaching and learning in African languages (and taking them as university modules and majors), stem from the long history of the hegemony of ex-colonial languages such as English and French in Africa, and are based on the fallacy that English is superior and that African languages are inferior.

In the past, the focus was on the motivation to learn English as a second language by the children of migrants in Europe and America who were immersed in foreign language systems, and therefore had no choice but to learn the new language as minorities (Maluch, Kempert, Neumann and Stanat, 2015). This approach has resulted, somehow, in inadequate theoretical paradigms and research directions for language learning motivation especially among students from disadvantaged first language backgrounds (Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie, 2017; Ushioda, 2017; Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2017).

In countries where colonial languages were imposed on the majority of indigenous people as functional languages, such languages were seen as being prestigious, a situation that led to the neglect of indigenous languages. In postcolonial settings, especially in Africa, ex-colonial languages continue to wield social power while indigenous languages remain underdeveloped. Globalisation is giving English more dominance over other ex-colonial languages and indigenous languages in the sense that the multilingualism demanded by the global world puts English at the top of the list of languages that one should be proficient in. English is often used alongside indigenous languages as a *lingua franca*, which leads to indigenous languages being relegated to localised spaces. These days, globalisation requires people to speak several indigenous languages fluently while at the same time mastering English in order to communicate with the global world. Ushioda (2017: 469) points out that “having skills in additional languages may thus offer a competitive edge in the global job market where English skills have become commonplace and where monolingual and even bilingual English speakers may lose out

to multilingual competitors”. These observations point to the significance of probing the motivation to learn local or indigenous languages such as isiZulu, as some findings have shown that they have potential to be useful resources in the workplace, as articulated by Ushioda (2017). Findings from such studies can also be used at institutions of higher learning to inform various policies for decolonising the institutions concerned.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is situated within the social psychological framework, particularly the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) and revised by Ryan and Deci (2000). SDT is embedded in the idea that individuals who are self-determined tend to feel “a sense of choice” in instigating and modifying their individual behaviours and activities (Deci and Ryan, 1985: 38). Self-determination is described as a “quality of human functioning that involves the experience of choice, in other words, the experience of an internally perceived locus of causality. Alternatively, self-determination is the capacity to choose and to have those choices, rather than reinforcement contingencies, drives, or any other forces or pressures, be determinants of one’s actions” (Deci and Ryan, 1985: 38).

Students’ language learning motivation (LLM) theories inform the present study. LLM theories in general seek to explain the fundamental question of why and how humans learn certain languages. LLM is informed by motivation theories on why humans do what they do or why they take certain decisions about their lives. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003: 614) explain that “motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it”. Dörnyei (2009) points out that every social and psychological aspect of human behaviour is driven by motivation and believes that motivation has the innate propensity to engage humans in interesting behaviours. It is further argued that “central to the development of motivation is working toward a flexible accommodation in the service of one’s self-determination” (Deci and Ryan, 1985: 38). It is advanced that “when self-determined, [one] acts out of choice rather than obligation or coercion, and [one’s] choices are based on an awareness of one’s organismic needs and flexible interpretation of external events” (Deci and Ryan, 1985: 38). Although self-determination is defined as a quality of human functioning, Deci and Ryan (1985) highlight that it can be either reinforced or stalled by ecological factors. Therefore, any exploration of self-determination should consider an understanding of environmental influences.

SDT divides motivation into three categories, namely *intrinsic motivation*, *extrinsic motivation* and *amotivation*. “Intrinsic motivation is a result of an interest in the subject – the satisfaction gained from doing something” (Öztürk, 2012: 38). Extrinsic motivation “results from some extrinsic reward such as good grades, job attainment, or avoiding punishment” (Öztürk, 2012: 38). Amotivation is a state of lacking intention to act. It is triggered by the situation where an individual does not value the activity, does not feel competent to engage in the activity or thinks that the activity is infeasible (Öztürk, 2012).

Such a situation arises when an individual responds by answering, “I don’t know” to the question, “Why do you learn this language?” (Özturk, 2012).

Dörnyei (2009) is of the view that although ‘motivation’ is a term frequently used in both educational and research contexts, there is little agreement in the literature about the definition of motivation. Dörnyei (2009: 117) further asserts that even though scholars seem to agree that “motivation is responsible for determining human behaviours by energizing it and giving it direction, the great variety of accounts put forward in the literature of how this happens may surprise even the seasoned researcher”. Dörnyei and Otto (1998) maintain that even though there is no general consensus on the definition of the term ‘motivation’, most scholars would agree that it concerns the direction and magnitude of human behaviour, that is, the choice of a particular action, the effort expended on it and persistence with it. Motivation is also seen as the “dynamically changing and cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised (successfully or unsuccessfully), and acted out” (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998: 65).

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and data collection

The main tool used to collect data for this study was a questionnaire. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010), a questionnaire is the main tool or instrument used to collect data in a descriptive survey research study. Perry (2008) comments on the benefits of using a questionnaire, suggesting that it can capture a large amount of information in a short time. According to Dörnyei (2003b), the main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency in terms of research time, research effort and financial resources. Along the same lines, Gillham (2007) adds that by administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of data in a short time and the personal investment required will be small in contrast to, for instance, interviewing the same number of participants.

The study used the Learning Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-L) used by Williams and Deci (1996). According to Williams and Deci (1996) and Black and Deci (2000), this type of questionnaire is commonly used to explore the reasons why people learn in a particular setting or participate in a certain learning programme. The SRQ-L investigates why people engage in learning-related behaviours.

The steps for data collection were as follows: First, the students targeted for this research were L1 isiZulu undergraduate students (of levels 2 and 3 modules). Second, to factor in the volunteer aspect, respondents were asked if they would voluntarily complete a questionnaire about their decision to enrol for L1 isiZulu courses. Third, the respondents who agreed to respond to the questionnaire were asked to sign consent forms. Fourth, the respondents took away the questionnaires in order to read them outside the lecture room and then to decide if they were comfortable in responding to the questions that were asked. Sixth, those who would find that they were uncomfortable to participate in responding to the questionnaire were requested to abstain when the questionnaires were completed the next day. Seventh, the respondents who were comfortable in responding to the questionnaire gathered in a common venue the following day to complete the questionnaires. During the questionnaire completion process, one programme participant helped to administer the questionnaires.

The programme participant who administered the questionnaires was advised not to take back questionnaires from respondents who were not happy to give them back. As a result, out of the 200 questionnaires that were distributed, 115 were returned and 21% per cent of them were from male students, while 79% of them came from female students.

Based on the biographical data questionnaire, 95% of these students were from the various schools in the college of humanities, including the school of arts, the school of social sciences, and the school of applied human sciences. About 5% belonged to the college of law and management sciences.

Data analysis

The questionnaire consisted of eight statements that represented extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors related to enrolling in isiZulu courses. Learners were requested to choose and comment on the various statements that described their motivation for enrolling in this particular course.

The first step was to group the data into three categories of motivation, namely intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation. The second step was to group responses according to each question in the three categories. The third step was to count the percentage scores to each response in the categories. The fourth step was to rate the scores of responses in each category. Findings are reflected in Table 3, and are discussed in the next subsection.

Table 3: Data analysis

Motivation	Factor	Respondents
Intrinsic	I understand better when I learn through the medium of isiZulu.	62%
	Affection for the language. I just like the language.	60%
	IsiZulu is part of my culture and identity.	59%
	I am an isiZulu mother tongue speaker, and isiZulu is an official language, so I have to study it at university level.	51%
Extrinsic	I need isiZulu for career purposes.	52%
	I am more successful in isiZulu courses.	34%
	Peer/family/instructor pressure.	13%
	Lack of course alternative.	6%
Amotivation	I am not motivated to enrol in isiZulu courses.	0.2%

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Data were analysed based on the SDT's three categories of motivation, namely intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation (Öztürk, 2012). The highest scores in Table 3 reflect intrinsic motivation. Although the SDT framework suggests that individuals can rarely possess both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations when engaging in behaviours and actions (Ryan and Deci, 2000), this study revealed otherwise. Many respondents indicated that they enrolled for the isiZulu courses because of their affection for the language, the fact that the language was part of their culture and identity, and that they understood better when they learnt through the medium of isiZulu. A significant number of students also revealed that they enrolled for these courses because of their career choices and because they performed much better in these courses. However, a handful chose pressure from other people and lack of course alternative as their motivation. These factors are discussed in detail next.

Enrolling for isiZulu mother tongue modules

The intrinsic motivational factor related to enrolling in an isiZulu module because of its mother tongue status was the most frequently cited reason. Sixty-two per cent of the respondents selected this motive. The pervasiveness of this motivational factor can be attributed to the fact that 99% of the respondents were isiZulu mother tongue speakers. Respondents felt that the use of isiZulu as a medium of instruction enabled them to understand and express themselves better during learning and assessments. Below are some of the responses from students:

IsiZulu is more understandable than English because there are words or even things that I fail to say in English. If I have to speak with an English professor, I have to first practise what I am going to say but when it's a Zulu professor it's easy I don't struggle [Respondent 11].

As an isiZulu mother tongue speaker, I find it difficult to understand English although I hear and get what is said in English but I can't respond easily. Firstly I have to analyse my speech or responses whether they are correct or not [Respondent 34].

Yes I do understand better because it is my language and I easily get to express myself freely without any hesitation [Respondent 39].

It is easier to understand instructions in isiZulu because it's something you are familiar with because it's a mother tongue, which is something you speak every day [Respondent 67].

Ngaye ngibone zingena kalula izifundo uma ngizifunda ngesiZulu (I sometimes find it easier to understand lessons when isiZulu is used as a language of teaching) [Respondent 68].

In relation to the outlined students' responses, many scholars have argued that mother tongue education is important in facilitating a learner's cognitive development, the promotion of the originality of thought and expression, and the promotion of learner-centred effective learning (Hameso, 1997; Webb, 2004; Trudell, 2005; Batibo, 2014). In addition to the learner-centred education suggested above, it has been argued that the positive cognitive effects of using a mother tongue as a medium of instruction include the ability to construct schemes for learning and the availability of prior knowledge in learning new content (Benson, 2000). The use of a foreign language, therefore, impedes the learning process (Motala, 2013; Trudell and Piper, 2014). In this regard, Sebolai's (2017) study points to clear advantages for using an African language as a strong base for enhancing additive language learning in higher education. Sebolai's study recommends that tertiary students' negative perceptions of African languages as languages of learning and teaching can be changed by frequently using African languages: "Using Sepedi [an African language] in addition to English helped [students] to understand concepts more easily than if they had been studying in a monolingual English context" (2017: 14).

Deep affection for the language

The second most frequently chosen intrinsic motivational factor (at 60%) for enrolling in isiZulu mother tongue courses was sheer affection for and interest in the language. Respondents' affection for the language stemmed from the mere fact that it was their mother tongue and from the desire to know more about the language. It is well documented that the teaching of a language is not restricted to linguistic knowledge but also encompasses exploration of social and natural aspects in which speakers of the target language are involved (Edwards, 1996). Some respondents indicated that they felt at home and appreciated an isiZulu medium classroom:

I like my language very much. That's why I chose to study it at this level. IsiZulu is the best language to me, not only because it is my language but because it shows respect, culture and allows for learning from each other [Respondent 21].

IsiZulu ngisizwa kahle futhi ulimi ebengilwenza ngokuluthanda. IsiZulu ulimi olucwengekile futhi oluzwakalayo ngazo zonke izikhathi, yingakho ngiluthanda (I understand isiZulu very well and I do it because I like it. IsiZulu is a well-coordinated language and it is user friendly all the time and that is the reason why I like it) [Respondent 33].

I love it. It's my home language after all [Respondent 47].

I like the language and I felt like I needed to study it so that I can even get to know more about it [Respondent 93].

I just like the language because when I study it, it gives me a sense of self and I feel home and appreciated [Respondent 99].

While there is evidence showing affection for the language, it cannot be denied that the hegemony of the English language has impacted negatively on attitudes towards the use of indigenous African languages such as isiZulu. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) maintain that the hegemonic nature of English, imposed through colonialism in Africa, has had the result of unquestionable prestige being associated with English, which has had the disastrous effect of distorting educational possibilities and weakening the value that African languages possess. The authors add that this weakening has caused too much psychological harm that many speakers of these languages have accepted their languages as basically inferior to English. In addition, Stroud (2001: 341) argues, "If speakers of indigenous languages view their own languages as dead ends, educationally, and of little use in official labour markets, then there is little chance that there will be 'buy-in' or belief in these languages from non-mother tongue speakers".

Therefore, there is a need to formulate strategies that will enable the decolonisation of the minds of African language speakers. It seems there is a need to investigate

the motivation for learning African languages with the aim of devising methods to promote them within the education system.

Identity and culture

Language in any given community is not limited to communication but also functions as an expression of a given community's culture, knowledge systems, history and cognitive memory, and as an embodiment of its values and beliefs (Rudwick, 2008; Nongogo, 2007; Mphasha, 2016). It is on such a basis that respondents felt their identity as isiZulu speakers and their culture, which was embedded in this language, motivated them to enrol in isiZulu mother tongue courses. This was the third most frequently chosen intrinsic motivational factor (at 59%). Respondents' comments in this regard were as follows:

I feel like I owe it to myself and my culture to honour isiZulu and study it further at tertiary level [Respondent 6].

The culture of Zulu includes the language that is spoken. If we stop speaking isiZulu, we will lose our identity [Respondent 22].

I study isiZulu because we need to develop it globally and to communicate with other nations [Respondent 55].

IsiZulu is my mother tongue. I believe it was only fair that I do it in an academic level because who is going to develop or advance my language if not me as a Zulu speaker. I have always loved my mother tongue and doing it was an obvious choice. It helps me to identify who I am and keep me in check with my identity and roots [Respondent 77].

IsiZulu is my mother tongue, therefore I find it very important to know it and know the language of my fore fathers very well [Respondent 94].

Growing [up] in KwaZulu-Natal, I have associated myself with Zulu culture and it has become my pride. I cannot deprive myself of this beautiful culture [Respondent 111].

There is little doubt that language plays a significant role in creating an awareness of and in reinforcing learners' identity and culture. It is important for any education system to embrace linguistic and cultural diversity in order to create a collective and contextualised learning environment. In this regard, Prah (2003) speaks of collective amnesia as a consequence of the lack of use of indigenous African languages in education. He argues that a large amount of indigenous knowledge contained in African languages is lost when these languages are devalued through a lack of use. Furthermore, Prah (2003) maintains that it is only when African realities are informed by people's languages and cultures that the continent can contribute to knowledge production rather than remain a 'scholastic appendage' of the West.

Career-related factors

In the extrinsic motivation category, 52% of the respondents indicated that they were motivated to enrol in isiZulu mother tongue courses because of their employment prospects. Some felt that the courses helped them to perfect their skills and provided them with a deeper understanding of the language they would need on their respective career paths. Respondents also demonstrated an awareness of the changing workplace landscape that required employees to be multilingual. Learning isiZulu in addition to English and other languages therefore would enable them to be functional multilinguals:

Ulimi lwesiZulu lusezinhlelweni zokuthuthukiswa lube sezingeni eliphezulu ngalokho ngibona kuzoba khona isidingo esikhulu sabantu abazoba ongoti olimini lolu (The isiZulu language is in the process of development so that it can have a higher status and therefore I foresee many experts in this language in the future) [Respondent 7].

I want to do PGCE after my studies or graduation and go for high school teaching career. I want to encourage learners to take isiZulu seriously and not take it for granted [Respondent 15].

I am studying towards a BA in Culture and heritage tourism in KwaZulu-Natal, therefore I believe isiZulu will be very essential [Respondent 44].

I don't just like the language. The thing is that my career path needs me to be more fluent in isiZulu. Basically I want to have a deeper understanding of the language and culture [Respondent 67].

It is suggested, in the literature, that human beings broaden their understanding and awareness of the world in every new language learnt. That is, a person who speaks multiple languages has a stereoscopic vision of the world from two or more perspectives, enabling them to be more flexible in their thinking, and learning to read more easily. This therefore implies that multilingual individuals are not restricted to a single world-view, but appreciate the existence of different world-views (Cook, 2003).

In addition, Mavesera (2011) argues that the modern workplace is characterised by a search for knowledge and information, which demands that workers should be able to communicate in several languages, handle information and adapt to new developments. It is therefore important at this juncture to highlight that, given South Africa's multilingual landscape, any form of additive multilingualism should embrace indigenous African languages. Such a form of multilingualism plays a vital role in facilitating interlingual and intercultural communication in the social and professional domains of life.

Greater success in isiZulu courses

Thirty-four per cent of respondents highlighted success in isiZulu courses when compared to other courses as a motivational factor in enrolling for isiZulu mother tongue courses. They attributed their success to the medium of instruction, which is their mother tongue:

True, it is where I excel because it is in me ... *Ila engibona khona ubuntu bami* (It is where I see my being) [Respondent 33].

Ever since my first year, I have been doing well in isiZulu. I have been passing it with flying colours compared to other courses I am doing. I always get merit in isiZulu but in other courses I get 50 or 60% [Respondent 60].

Ngenza kahle kuzo zonke izifundo kodwa isiZulu siba isifundo esinamamaki aphezulu (I do well in all my courses but isiZulu has the highest marks) [Respondent 69].

Yes I got better marks in isiZulu compared to psychology and management [Respondent 80].

I do my best in isiZulu courses because I experience freedom and I understand it better. IsiZulu is an easy language because I grew up speaking isiZulu. I pass isiZulu more than other courses [Respondent 101].

Research shows that students are more successful when education is delivered through their mother tongue or first language (on the implication of language being a contributing factor in the performance of learners, see South African studies on academic literacy that are available on the website of the Network of Expertise in Language Assessment (NexLA), at the website, <https://nexla.org.za>). In South Africa, where the dominant language of instruction is English, academic success remains a major point of concern, more specifically for the majority of black students. The graduation rate for students aged between 20 and 24 is only 5%. The reason for the above is assumedly low levels of academic literacy in English, the de facto language of teaching and learning (Ngcobo, 2014). In addition, Du Plessis and Gerber (2012) in their study on the academic preparedness of students, found high levels of student failure and increasing dropout rates. According to this study, this is a result of general under-preparedness because of the lack of English proficiency, among other things.

Peer/family/instructor pressure and lack of course alternatives

The least chosen extrinsic motivational factors for enrolling in isiZulu mother tongue courses are peer/family/instructor pressure and lack of course alternatives. Thirteen per cent of the respondents chose peer, family or instructor pressure as a motivational

factor, while 6% chose the lack of a course alternative as their motivational factor. No comments were included to substantiate their choices. These results could be linked to negative attitudes towards African languages in South African higher education.

CONCLUSION

This article explored motivational factors that influence students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to enrol in isiZulu first language courses. The specific research objective was to examine the reasons why an increasing number of students had become interested in taking mother tongue isiZulu courses at university level. The study also sought to establish whether such motivation was intrinsic or extrinsic. A total of 115 students who enrolled in an isiZulu mother tongue course at second- and third-year level were able to participate in this study.

The study found that motivation among these students was both intrinsic and extrinsic. However, intrinsic motivational factors were chosen by a higher percentage of students compared to extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivational factors included better understanding through isiZulu as a medium of instruction for 62% of the respondents, affection for the language for 60%, and isiZulu as part of culture and identity for 59%. Extrinsic motivational factors included studying isiZulu for career purposes, for 52% of the respondents, greater success in isiZulu courses for 34% and peer, family or instructor pressure for 13% of the respondents, with lack of a course alternative for 6%.

The findings of this study show that motivation in the case of isiZulu as a first language is influenced by a variety of factors. In addition, the findings highlight the importance of understanding students' motivation for taking isiZulu courses in higher education.

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