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Pre-service teachers' attitudes and ethnocentrism regarding language-in-education issues

ABSTRACT

Different attitudes towards the use of English as the MoI within a multilingual environment exist. These attitudes can affect pre-service teachers' future classroom practices and learners' performance. In this regard, ethnocentrism, an attitudinal indicator, should be considered when investigating pre-service teachers' attitudes towards language-in-education issues. Ethnocentrism, the tendency of an individual to identify strongly with their own ethnicity and reject others', draws on the social identity theory, owing to its focus on in-group-out-group distinctions, racism and stereotyping. This article's primary purpose was to determine if pre-service teachers' attitudes toward language-in-education issues are related to their degree of ethnocentrism. An embedded mixed- methods research design and a post-positivist paradigm was used. The research site was a private higher education institution with a mono-ethnic student population. A questionnaire using the Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale and the Generalised Ethnocentrism Scale served as the data collection instrument to measure 1 164 pre-service teachers' attitudes towards language-in-education issues and their degree of ethnocentrism. The data showed a statistically significant relationship between the pre-service teachers' attitudes and their degree of ethnocentrism and revealed potential indicators of lower and higher degrees of ethnocentrism. This study recommends that teacher education programmes create awareness of the relationship between attitudes and ethnocentrism to prepare pre-service teachers for multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

Keywords: Attitudes, English, Ethnocentrism, Language-in-education issues, Medium of Instruction, Mono-ethnic environment, Pre-service teachers.

1.   Introduction

Language-in-education is a topic that has received widespread attention over the past decade, especially in South Africa. Language-in-education issues that have led to various debates worldwide include changing classroom dynamics and demographics that influence the Medium of Instruction (MoI) used and the linguistic diversity evident just in classrooms. Language-in-education issues have taken centre stage owing to increased multiculturalism and multilingualism in educational settings such as classrooms. Although classroom demographics have changed, there is still a preference for English as the MoI even when it is not the mother tongue of the learner or the teacher (Evans & Cleghorn, 2012; Heugh, 2009; Ndebele, 2014; Owen-Smith, 2012; Peyper, 2014; Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2010; Wolhuter, 2012). The above mentioned issues in South Africa highlight the need for competent English as the MoI teachers, tolerant attitudes towards cultural and linguistic diversity and low degrees of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism refers to the tendency of an individual to identify strongly with their own ethnicity and reject that of others (Mangnale, Potluri & Degufu, 2011; Sumner, 1906). The construct ethnocentrism aligns with the Social Identity Theory (SIT) due to its focus on in-group-out-group distinctions, racism, and stereotyping based on, for example, ethnicity (Haslam, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1982; Tajfel, Flament, Turner, 1975). When preparing pre-service teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, research about their attitudes towards language-in-education issues as well as their degree of ethnocentrism is needed as the latter could affect their classroom practices and learners' performance (e.g., Cain, 2012; Johnson, 1992, 1994; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Kazempour & Sadler, 2015; Lombard, 2017; Vibulphol, 2004; Xu, 2012). This article investigates pre-service teachers' attitudes towards language-in-education issues and their degree of ethnocentrism to determine if a relationship exists.

2.   Attitudes toward language-in-education issues in South Africa

Various national and international studies (e.g., Cain, 2012; Haukås, 2016; Incecay, 2011; Johnson, 1992, 1994; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Kazempour & Sadler, 2015; Lombard, 2017; Vibulphol, 2004) have shown consistent findings about the relationship between teachers' attitudes and their classroom practices. Based on the growing evidence indicating the significant impact of teachers' attitudes on learner performance (Xu, 2012), research into pre-service teachers' attitudes towards language-in-education issues has become imperative. The main language-in-education issues to be investigated in this article are pre-service teachers' attitude towards using English as the MoI just in a multilingual context and their level of tolerance towards language diversity (i.e., learning additional languages, promoting African languages and multilingualism) and non- or limited-English-proficient learners.

The *Language in Education Policy* (LiEP) in South Africa was designed to promote multilingualism, indigenous languages and mother-tongue education (Beukes, 2009;

DoE, 1997; Heugh, 2002; RSA, 1996). Despite the support for multilingualism and mother-tongue education by the LiEP and other legislation, a strong tendency towards a predominantly English education system, especially within urban schools, is evident (Owen-Smith, 2012; Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017; UNESCO, 2010; Williams, 2011; Wolhuter, 2012). The tenacious desire of parents to have English, an internationally renowned language, as their children's MoI is increasing, with 68% of South African learners in 2014 having been enrolled for English as their MoI, while only 7% are English mother-tongue speakers (Ndebele, 2014).

Mixed attitudes exist regarding the preference for English as the MoI in multilingual contexts.−There are two predominant arguments in the literature about the use of English as the MoI. The first argument is against the global spread of English within education, as it is believed to be a way of supporting colonialism that threatens local languages, promotes linguistic imperialism and leads to linguistic power, complacency and, ultimately, linguistic genocide or the death of indigenous languages (Barnes, 2005; Boulleys, 2014; Crystal, 2003; Phillipson, 1992; Simons & Fennig, 2020; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The preference for English as the MoI for learners who are not mother-tongue English speakers is described by educationalists such as Evans and Cleghorn (2012, p. 10) as a linguistic shift that "imposes a heavy cognitive load that jeopardises the learning experience" of South African learners.

In contrast, the second argument advocates for the further spread of English, as a globalised, powerful and prestigious language, which serves as an international tool that can lead to economic and professional success (Chetty & Mwepu, 2008; Guilherme, 2007; Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017). Arguments about English being an international tool are among the main reasons why many parents prefer English as the MoI instead of their mother-tongues (D'Oliveira, 2013; Hornberger, 2002; Nyaga, 2013; Plüddemann, 2015; Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002). Various other reasons have been reported for English as a preference, such as a "deep suspicion" about mother-tongue education left by the Bantu Education Act during apartheid (Hornberger, 2002). The Bantu Education Act aimed to enforce racially segregated education and transferred control of African education to the Native Affairs Department, which previously formed part of the Department of Education (Woodrooffe, 2011). The Bantu Education Act is therefore associated with an inferior education. Studies by Setati et al. (2002) and Hornberger (2002) report that parents and schools reject African languages (i.e., Bantu languages) as the MoI because they have a bad image still associated with an inferior education. The failure to implement the LiEP can therefore, also be associated with parents' decision against mother-tongue education and their preference for English as their children's MoI. This is known as a subtractive approach to language learning which is in opposition to the additive approach recommended by the LiEP.

Challenges concerning the implementation of mother-tongue education within multilingual settings are another reason for English as the preferred MoI. Implementation challenges of mother-tongue education within schools have been reported in various studies. The following table summarises the reported implementation challenges.

Table 1: Challenges of the implementation of a mother-tongue education policy

Reasons for implementation challenges	List of studies where challenges were reported
A lack of teaching and learning material for the different languages	Baker (2011); Bamgbose (1991 in Nyaga, 2013); Kamwendo (2000); Stroud (2001)
Teachers are not trained or proficient in teaching in the mother tongue of the learner	Graham (2010); Jones (2010); Mutiga (2014); Ogechi (2003); Ralarala et al. (2017); UNESCO (2003)
Negative attitudes towards mother tongue as the language of learning and teaching	Bamgbose (1991 in Nyaga, 2013); D'Oliveira (2013); Hornberger (2002); Kamwendo (2000); Setati et al. (2002); UNESCO (2003); United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2016)
A lack of academic terminology in the mother tongue necessary for educational purposes	Bamgbose (2004 in Nyaga, 2013); UNESCO (2003a)
The impracticality of accommodating multiple mother-tongue languages within the classrooms	Bamgbose (2004 in Nyaga, 2013); Graham (2009); Kyeyune (2004); Tembe and Norton (2008)
Poor communication of the LiEP and the LiEP being overshadowed by the curriculum	Potgieter and Anthonissen (2017)
Cost and structural underdevelopment for the implementation of mother-tongue education	Boulleys (2014)
Standardisation of African languages - All of the standard varieties of the African languages are generally accepted	Webb (2013)
A lack of choice with regard to the MoI presented in schools due to a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude adopted by school governing bodies	Boulleys (2014, p. 191)
Fear of "separate language" development that could risk "social cohesion"	Webb (2013, p. 180)
Globalisation has increased the desire for English as the MoI instead of mother-tongue languages	Webb (2013)

The above discussion deals with two different views on the matter of the MoI at South Africa schools. However, using a MoI such as English that teachers are not proficient in or that the learners do not understand can significantly obstruct learning. Pre-service teachers' attitudes towards using English as the MoI and their degree of ethnocentrism could also affect learning within multilingual classrooms. Therefore, in this article, pre-service teachers' attitudes and ethnocentrism regarding language-in-education issues were investigated as possible variables that could affect their classroom practice and learner performance.

3.   Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is a psychological process that results from social or group identity formation (Tajfel & Turner, 1982, p. 7). Levinson (1950, p. 150) argues that ethnocentrism is:

> "… based on a pervasive and rigid in-group-out-group distinction; it involves stereotyped, negative imagery and hostile attitudes regarding out-groups, stereotyped positive imagery and submissive attitudes regarding in-groups, and a hierarchical, authoritarian view of group interaction in which in-groups are rightly dominant, outgroups subordinate."

While ethnocentrism can be associated with national pride and even patriotism (Neuliep, 2002), a higher degree of ethnocentrism is associated with people who are "lacking acceptance of cultural diversity" (Hooghe, 2008, p. 11). High degrees of ethnocentrism are associated with the belief that one's own ethnic group is superior to other ethnic groups and that one's cultural standards can be applied universally (Hooghe, 2008; Tajfel, 1982). Studies on ethnocentrism attempt to understand in-group-out-group distinctions, group antagonism, social competition, in-group discrimination, stereotyping and, finally, believing that one's "own" group is better (Brown, 2000; Haslam, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1982, 1986; Tajfel et al., 1971; Turner, 1975). Studies using SIT have found that people prefer to interact with people of a similar ethnicity (Barner-Rasmussen & Bjorkman, 2007; Tajfel, 1982; Wöcke Grosse, Stacey & Brits, 2018). Ethnicity and ethnic identity are viewed as complex social constructs that reflect several aspects of identification, such as language, culture, religion and race, of a specific ethnic group (Cuellar, Nyberg, Maldonado & Roberts, 1997).

According to Tajfel and Turner (1982, p. 8), two prominent SIT researchers, "a useful empirical question is possible: What are the conditions which lead to an increase or decrease in ethnocentrism or even perhaps sometimes to its disappearance?" To answer this question, indicators within various studies over the past 20 years should be considered. In a study by Amos and McCroskey (1999), people with high degrees of ethnocentrism were significantly more likely to have negative attitudes towards and expectations of 'others'. In more recent studies, ethnocentrism has been found to predict

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or strongly correlate with a lack of cultural intelligence (Harrison, 2012; Young, Haffejee & Corsun, 2017), intercultural communication apprehension (Wrench & McCroskey, 2003; Wrench, Corrigan, McCroskey & Punyanunt-Carter, 2006), religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer, 2003; Wrench et al., 2006), homonegativity (Wrench et al., 2006) and homophobia (Wrench & McCroskey, 2002). From the above mentioned studies, it is evident that these aspects can be associated with ethnocentrism as they are attitudinal indicators thereof.

The environment and one's social experiences are other aspects to consider when investigating ethnocentrism. The sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) explains how the environment and social experiences play a fundamental role in human development. Vygotsky (1978) firmly believes that human development is an interaction between biological and sociocultural change. Therefore, a person's degree of ethnocentrism can be affected by environmental exposure and social experiences with others. Yusof, Abdullah and Ahmad (2014) assert that a mono-ethnic environment may be one reason for some individuals having a higher degree of ethnocentrism. The argument exists that exposure or a lack of exposure to other ethnicities (i.e., races, cultures and languages) can affect one's degree of ethnocentrism. Ager's (2001, p. 125) research strengthens the argument made by Yusof et al. (2014) by observing that people's attitudes and beliefs are socially conditioned and, therefore, usually shared within a community or society. Mono-ethnic environments are also associated with in-group-out-group distinctions and ethnocentrism since people who find themselves in mono-ethnic environments rarely interact with people from other race groups (Hofmeyr, 2006; Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017). Language, an aspect of ethnicity, has been reported as one of the most prominent reasons for establishing mono-ethnic environments and a potential barrier to intercultural interaction in South Africa (Giliomee, 2019; Hofmeyr, 2006; Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017).

To investigate the relationship between ethnocentrism and attitudes towards language-in-education, this study was conducted at a private Higher Education Institution (HEI) that is considered mono-ethnic due to the student populations' homogenous nature.

4.   Contextualisation of the study

After the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, a system that segregated people based on race, there was a call for democratic transformation. This included desegregating mono-ethnic environments, such as schools and HEIs, by integrating learners and students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. However, 25 years after the call for transformation, mono-ethnic schooling environments still exist. According to Hofmeyr (2006) and Potgieter and Anthonissen (2017), mono-ethnic environments are typical, especially in rural areas in South Africa. South Africa's history of segregation and colonialism has contributed to the existence of mono-ethnic environments. Other reasons for mono-ethnic environments include shared aspects of ethnicity (such as language, culture, religion and race), shared social identities and high degrees of ethnocentrism associated with in-group-out-group

distinctions. Mono-ethnic environments are well described by the English proverb "birds of a feather flock together" or "soort soek soort" in Afrikaans.

Although mono-ethnic environments are typical of a diverse country such as South Africa, the demographics of various HEIs and school classrooms are continuously changing, especially in urban areas. The research site of the current study is unique since it is situated in an urban area but has an ethnically homogenous (mono-ethnic) student population. The mono-ethnic characteristics of the student population include language, culture (Afrikaner), religion, and race. The pre-service teachers who participated in the study had chosen to study there, even though various other options were available to them. The mono-ethnic nature of the research site can be described as in-group favouritism (Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1982), ethnic favouritism (De Luca, Hodler, Raschky & Valsecchi, 2018), or enclaved migration (Van der Westhuizen, 2016).

Since mono-ethnic HEI environments could imply that pre-service teachers are only being prepared for a "monoculture, a mythical, culturally homogeneous" schooling environment (Bullock, 1998, p. 1025), this article investigated the pre-service teachers' attitudes toward language-in-education issues as well as their degree of ethnocentrism as possible variables that could affect their future classroom practices.

5.   Methodology

The study's embedded mixed methods research design allowed for the combination of a primary, quantitative design with a secondary, qualitative research design. The qualitative dataset was therefore embedded into a more extensive quantitative dataset. The post-positivist paradigm served the investigation best as it emphasises the inadequacy of dualistic thinking and emphasises the multiplicity and complexity of the reality of all human experiences (Ryan, 2006). The post-positivist paradigm furthermore also legitimises the use of mixed method research designs (Henderson, 2011).

Data were collected from 1164 registered pre-service teachers (n=1164) at a private, mono-ethnic HEI to gain a comprehensive understanding of the homogenous student population. The pre-service teachers were asked to voluntarily and anonymously complete an online Google Forms questionnaire.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the participants were first-year students, 25% second-year students and 13% third-year students. The fourth-, fifth- and sixth-year students together formed only 4% of the sample. The average age of the respondents was 21.5 (21 years and 6 months) with a standard deviation of 5.2 years. The majority of the respondents also indicated that their home language (mother tongue) was Afrikaans (92.5%), while the rest (7.1%) showed that their home language was English (1.3%) or that they were bilingual with both Afrikaans and English as home languages (5.8%). Ninety-four percent (94%) indicated that English was their strongest second language, while 5.6% indicated

that Afrikaans was their second strongest language. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the respondents had Afrikaans as the MoI in primary school and 94% had Afrikaans as the MoI in high school.

The online questionnaire consisted of biographical questions, four open-ended qualitative questions and two international surveys. The international surveys were the Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale (LATS) (Byrnes & Kiger, 1994) survey and the revised Generalised Ethnocentrism (GENE) (Neuliep, 2002) survey. Both surveys are self-reporting instruments that use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". The LATS consists of 13 items. In Byrnes and Kiger's (1994) study, the 13 statements had three sets of factor loadings concerning language, which were labelled "language politics", "limited English proficiency (LEP) intolerance" and "language support". All three sets of the factor loadings provide information regarding teachers' attitudes and beliefs about linguistic diversity in the classroom and the use of English as the MoI (i.e., language-in-education issues). The GENE consists of 22 items, of which only 15 items are calculated (add scores of the 15 items together). Seven items are used as distractors and three items have to be reverse-scored to increase the validity and reliability of the survey. Despite a careful search, there appear to be no definitive norms on the GENE scale. However, a mean score of around 30 has been reported in various studies and a score of 50 is considered to a high degree of ethnocentrism (Amos & McCroskey, 1999; Neuliep, 2002; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Wrench & McCroskey, 2002).

The quantitative data were analysed with the aim to measure the respondents' GENE and LATS scores. The relationship between the respondents' GENE and LATS scores was determined through correlational analysis. The qualitative data were analysed by open coding and thematic analysis within ATLAS.ti, a qualitative analysis program. The researcher further sought to find more in-depth explanations by integrating, comparing and contrasting both the qualitative and quantitative datasets.

6.   Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for this study was received from the University of Pretoria (HU 18 08 01). All participants in the study, including the research board of the private HEI participated voluntarily and gave informed consent. The Anonymity of the participants has been ensured by not declaring any personal information and by keeping the name of the PHEI confidential.

7.   Findings and Discussion

The qualitative and quantitative findings of this study were combined and integrated to increase the rigour of the research results. Therefore, in this section, all of the qualitative and quantitative findings are presented and discussed simultaneously.

The data showed that the pre-service teachers at the mono-ethnic HEI have varying attitudes toward language-in-education issues. A prominent issue probed in this paper relates to the pre-service teachers' use of English as a MoI. The pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism is also reported. From the data, three themes are discussed. The three themes are as follow:

•   Pre-service teachers' attitude towards language-in-education issues;

•   Pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism;

•   The relationship between pre-service teachers' attitude towards language-in-education issues and their degree of ethnocentrism.

Pre-service teachers attitude towards language-in-education-issues

The LATS survey section of the questionnaire addressed various language-in-education issues such as mother-tongue education, English as the MoI, multilingualism, and limited-English-proficient learners. The LATS survey comprised 13 items and three constructs namely, "language support," "language politics," and "LEP intolerance". Cronbach's alpha showed the LATS survey had an overall low reliability of $\alpha = 0.55$ (cf. Field, 2018). The reliability of each construct was tested and evaluated for possible retention or removal of items. The language support construct consisted of four items (C2, 4, 5 & 9) and scored low reliability ($\alpha = 0.3$) (Field, 2018). Since Item C5 scored below 0.5, it was removed to increase the overall Cronbach alpha to 0.582. The language politics construct also consisted of four items (C1, 3, 7 & 12) and scored low reliability of $\alpha = 0.4$ (cf. Field, 2018). Since item C3 scored below 0.5, it was removed to increase the overall Cronbach alpha to 0.513. The LEP intolerance construct consisted of five items (C6, 8, 10, 11 & 13) and also scored low reliability of $\alpha = 0.5$ (cf. Field, 2018). No item was removed; all the items of this construct were retained because removing an item would have decreased the overall construct's alpha and 0.5 is acceptable (Field, 2018).

The LATS's mean score was 3.07 (*SD* = 0.43), with a minimum score of 1.38 and a maximum of 5. The following table reports the mean and standard deviation of each item. The (A) refers to items that had to be reverse-scored.

Language support	Mean	Std. deviation
2: I would support the government spending additional money to provide better African language curricula in schools. (A)	3.47	1.107
4: It is important that people in South Africa learn a language in addition to English and Afrikaans. (A).	3.88	1.018
5: It is unreasonable to expect a regular-classroom teacher to teach a child who has limited English proficiency. (Excluded n calculations)	2.70	1.166
9: Teachers should receive training on how to meet the needs of African mother-tongue learners. (A)	3.90	1.011
Language Politics	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**
1: To be considered South African, one should speak English or Afrikaans.	2.28	1.291
3: Parents of non- or limited English-proficient learners should be encouraged to speak English with their children whenever possible. (Excluded n calculations)	3.81	1.013
7: Local and state governments should require that all government business (including voting) be conducted in English only.	2.25	1.181
12: English and Afrikaans should be the only official languages of South Africa.	1.96	1.113
LEP intolerance	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**
6: Learning English should be a priority for non-English-proficient or limited English-proficient learners, even if it means they lose the ability to speak their mother tongue.	2.58	1.125
8: Having non- or limited English-proficient learners in the classroom hampers the progress of the others.	3.11	1.024
10: Most non- and limited English-proficient children are not motivated to learn English.	3.27	1.017
11: Non- or limited English-proficient learners should rather learn English first before learning other subjects.	3.33	1.077

Language support	Mean	Std. deviation
13: Non- and limited English-proficient learners often use untrue claims of discrimination as an excuse for not doing well in school.	3.49	1.063

The above table shows that item C9 scored the highest (3.90) and that item C12 scored the lowest (1.96) on average. Item C9's score shows that the pre-service teachers believed that teachers should receive training in meeting the needs of African mother-tongue speakers. Item C12 scored the lowest, which showed that the student teachers disagreed with the statement that English and Afrikaans should be the only official languages. This finding also aligns with the total scores of the three different constructs. The respondents scored the highest with regard to "language support" (11.2 out of a possible 15, thus 74%), followed by "LEP intolerance" (15.7 out of a possible 25, thus 62.8%) and, lastly, "language politics" (6.4 out of a possible 15, thus 42.6%). This shows that the pre-service teachers have positive attitudes towards multilingualism and multiculturalism, learners who need language support and are tolerant of LEP learners.

A major language-in-education issue addressed within the questionnaire was about English being used as the MoI when it is not the learner's or teachers' mother tongue. This was investigated quantitatively by using the students' LATS responses about English as well as the biographical section of the questionnaire. The pre-service teachers' were asked about their teaching environments and own English proficiency as well as qualitatively by asking four open-ended questions about using English as MoI. From the quantitative findings, it was evident that 53% of the pre-service teachers felt positive (between good and very good) about their own proficiency, 41% felt "average" (3), while only 6% felt negative (between poor and very poor). In the qualitative part (i.e., responses to the open-ended questions), the pre-service teachers were asked to explain further how they felt about using English as the MoI and their responses mostly related to their own and their learners' English proficiency. In 73 responses, the participants showed varying attitudes towards using English as the MoI, from feeling confident and comfortable to feeling incompetent and uncomfortable. Words and phrases the pre-service teachers used to describe how they felt about using English as the MoI included "comfortable" (1:12), "I enjoy it" (1:27), "I love teaching English" (1:32), "good" (1:33), "find it very easy", "confident" (1:44), "positive" (1:49), "excited" (1:94), "passionate" (1:110, 1:51), "optimistic" (1:193), "fantastic" (1:221), "proficient" (1:272), "beautiful language" (1:67), "I love English and would teach English every day" (1:19) and "I am comfortable enough in my abilities to teach in English" (1:17). Some of the pre-service teachers commented that they "don't have a problem with it at all" (1:54), "have a basic and good grasp on the language" (1:152) and felt "comfortable with the language and can speak it fluently. I would enjoy teaching English" (1:12). Other pre-service teachers admitted that

they were "mostly comfortable but have to do a little more preparing" (1:43). In contrast, there were students who made it clear that they felt "negative" (1:4, 7), "uneasy" (1:9, 11), "scared and self-aware" (1:10), "terrified" (1:13), "difficult" (1:30), "nervous" (1:31, 380), "uncomfortable" (1:34, 39), "anxious" (1:48, 75, 78), "struggling" (1:117), "worried" (1:234), "stressful" (1:452) and "nervous" (1:462) about using English as the MoI.

The association between the pre-service teachers' attitude towards English as a MoI and their beliefs about their own language proficiency was evident in 28 responses where they explained that they felt: "negative about teaching in English because it's my second language and I'm not so confident in the language" (1:1), "negative because my English is very bad and I can't and don't want to teach in English" (1:3). Another respondent complained that he or she did not like teaching in English because it "is challenging and doesn't come naturally" (1:197) and another one said, "If I had a choice I would rather avoid it" (1:348). One pre-service teacher explained, "My English is not very good so I am not very positive about teaching in English" (1:45). Similarly, other pre-service teachers said they would only use English as the MoI if they "had to" (1:81) or "needed to" (1:80), but that it was "not preferred" (1:80). Some pre-service teachers explained that they were "too scared and not taught well enough to teach others" (1:129), that "there is still a lot for me to learn to be able to teach in English" (1:107) and that they "need more training" (1:178), "will need improvement" (1:360) and were "still learning to teach in English" (1:383).

Another pre-service teacher stated that "I does [sic] not feel as confident teaching in English as in Afrikaans" (1:195) while another explained, "I feel embarrassed when I have to speak English because I didn't get enough exposure to the language" (1:314). The lack of exposure to English expressed by this pre-service teacher emphasises the concerns relating to mono-ethnic environments, such as rural areas, and institutions, such as the research site. This lack of exposure is unusual in an urban area where English is used and in light of the fact that English is a lingua franca in parts of South Africa. However, the National South African Reconciliation Barometer survey (Hofmeyr, 2006; Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017) has indicated that 52% of South Africans rarely or never interact with people from other race groups and that language as a salient identity marker among South Africans has been reported as one of the most prominent barriers to intercultural interaction.

Furthermore, there were 23 responses in the data that indicated the pre-service teachers' concerns about using English as their MoI within a multilingual setting. The 23 responses included information about learners' lack of English proficiency and the effect it could have on, for example, the learners' understanding in the classroom, the implications with regard to time to help learners overcome language barriers and the learners being treated "unfairly" (3:59) or "poorly" (3:61) if all of them are not receiving education in their mother tongue. The pre-service teachers raised questions such as "What do I do when I have a child in my class that cannot speak English or Afrikaans?" (3:88) and "I just want to say that if you cannot speak a language why would you put your child in a school that educate [sic] in that language" (3:23). These questions indicated the pre-service teachers' negative attitude towards the use of English as the MoI.These questions also

indicate the pre-service teachers' ignorance about parents' misplaced belief that English as the MoI, regardless of their child's proficiency, will ensure a future for their children (Evans & Cleghorn, 2012).

Pre-service teachers' degrees of ethnocentrism

The pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism was investigated quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The quantitative results are based on the findings of the GENE survey. The mean score for the 15 items was 31.53 (SD = 8.62), which is far below the calcuated score of 50, considered to represent a high degree of ethnocentrism (Neuliep, 2002). The descriptive statistics of each of the 15 items of the GENE survey are reported in the following table.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the GENE

	Mean	Std. deviation
1: Most other cultures are backward compared to my culture.	2.35	.989
2: My culture should be the role model for other cultures.	2.68	1.216
4: Lifestyles in other cultures are just as valid as those in my culture. (A)	1.74	.969
5: Other cultures should try to be more like my culture.	2.12	1.028
7: People in my culture could learn a lot from people in other cultures. (A)	2.20	1.003
8: Most people from other cultures just don't know what's good for them.	1.96	.942
9: I respect the values and customs of other cultures. (A)	1.48	.747
10: It is smart of other cultures to look up to my culture.	2.83	1.118
11: Most people would be happier if they lived like people in my culture.	2.31	1.055
13: People in my culture have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere.	2.20	.956
14: Lifestyles in other cultures are not as valid as those in my culture.	1.95	.974

	Mean	Std. deviation
18: I do not cooperate with people who are different.	1.70	.906
20: I do not trust people who are different from me.	2.58	1.050
21: I dislike interacting with people from different cultures.	1.84	.917
22: I have little respect for the values and customs of other cultures.	1.60	.955

A mean score of 2.1 was calculated for all the items, which shows that the respondents mostly "disagreed" with the statements regarding ethnocentrism. It is also evident that item B2 scored the highest (2.68) and item B9 scored the lowest (1.48). Both these items are directly related to the respondents' attitudes and beliefs about their own culture and others' culture.

Since there appear to be no definitive, quantitative norms on the GENE scale with regard to a person's GENE (ethnocentrism) score, the purpose of the qualitative data analysis was to gain an in-depth understanding of the degree of ethnocentrism measured within the quantitative data. Two categories emerged from the qualitative data that describes the pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism: Indicators of lower and higher degrees of ethnocentrism.

• **Indicators of lower degrees of ethnocentrism**

From a total of 72 responses, indicators of lower degrees of ethnocentrism were identified that showed acceptance of diversity and a willingness to learn about others who are different from them. For example, some pre-service teachers expressed beliefs about the importance of promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism within the schooling context. They explained the importance of accepting and being tolerant towards all languages as "language is just a tool" (1:388) and that "it is good for children to learn another language" (1:413). The pre-service teachers' belief that South Africans should be proud of being multilingual and multicultural and that "everybody in South Africa has his or her rights of learning and speaking in their language and should not be discriminated against for that" (3:11) serves as another potential indicator of lower ethnocentrism. One pre-service teacher stated, "I believe that all cultures should be respected, even if we don't always agree on things, it does not give us any right to think one culture is more [sic] superior or inferior to another" (3:17). This statement aligns with the position taken by other pre-service teachers who agreed that "all cultures should be respected" (3:21), "that children should be able to go to school in their home languages, therefore there must be schools for all cultures and languages" (3:25) and "that discrimination against different cultures is utterly wrong and people should just live and accept the world and the different people within it" (3:7).

Another potential indicator of lower degrees of ethnocentrism is the belief that learners should formally be taught a third language at school and that African languages should be promoted and used within schools. One pre-service teacher felt strongly that "ALL schools should enforce a third additional language whether it is a state, semi private or private school" (3:16). Another pre-service teacher agreed, "I think it is important for everyone to learn at least one African language" (3:46). From one pre-service teacher's response, the importance of communication was emphasised: "

> *I would only like to say that; [sic] it would be good for our nation if schools implement an African language other than Afrikaans or English as a main language in our schools. I myself would have liked to be educated about an African language, because it would improve communication between different cultures in our country." (3:103)*

Other possible indicators of lower degrees of ethnocentrism could be identified in the pre-service teachers' responses about teaching diverse learners. For example, one pre-service teacher said, "South Africans come from a wide range of families and languages it is our responsibility as teachers to do our best in making these children become the best they can be no matter what their language or cultures are" (3:5). Another pre-service teacher stated, "teaching is not about the language it is about the kids and the ability to teach them something" (1:164), which aligned with another pre-service teacher'view that "teaching will always be my passion[,] no matter the language" (1:467). Responses such as these show that some pre-service teachers accept the multilingual or multicultural classroom contexts of schools.

Another potential indicator of lower degrees of ethnocentrism relates to the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the questionnaire administered to them for this study. For example, one pre-service teacher said, "I'm glad a survey like this is being done, except the fact that the people stay anonymous. I think this survey can be used as a guideline to see how many teachers to be are racist" (3:9). Other pre-service teachers agreed and explained that "the questions got me thinking deeper of … how teachers can make a difference despite their different cultures" (3:22), "It has aroused my curiosity to read more about the topics that were addressed in the questionnaire. Thank you!" (3:2), "the questionnaire forces you to think about the reality facing many children and teachers in South-Africa [sic]" (3:45) and "It was very educational to realise how I feel about certain matters I never really thought about (3:47)". Based on these responses, potential indicators of lower degrees of ethnocentrism can be associated with attitudes that are accepting and respectful of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Therefore, indicators of lower degrees of ethnocentrism can also be one's willingness to assess their own degree of ethnocentrism.

Even though potential indicators of lower degrees of ethnocentrism were even in the data, higher ethnocentrism indicators also emerged.

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- **Indicators of higher degrees of ethnocentrism**

Possible indicators of higher degrees of ethnocentrism emerged from the pre-service teachers' responses when they expressed attitudes and beliefs that resembled ethnic favouritism (see. Yusof et al., 2014) or assumptions about their own ethnic group (including race, language, culture and religion) being superior to other ethnic groups (cf. Hooghes, 2008). Other potential indicators that were identified in the pre-service teachers' responses could be viewed as "lacking acceptance of cultural diversity" (cf. Hooghes, 2008) and making "in-group, out-group distinctions" (Levinson, 1950, p. 150) based on ethnic characteristics or similarities. The pre-service teachers' use of pronouns such as "they", "them", "their", "we" and "us" provided information about how they viewed their own culture as central, while reducing other cultures or religious traditions to a less prominent role (cf. Mangnale et al., 2011). Here are examples of collective language usage, where personal pronouns indicate higher degrees of ethnocentrism:

> If **they** cant [sic] speak English or Afrikaans t**hey** must go to a school that teach [sic] in **their** home language. (3:34)

> Learners should learn to adapt to other cultures so we can understand **them** better and accept **their** way of living. (3:67)

> I think that **we** have to put a [sic] African language in school, because then **the people** well [sic] respect you and listen to you. (3:92)

Other potential indicators of high degrees of ethnocentrism were evident in responses about the ethnic characteristics the pre-service teachers had in common, such as language, race, culture and religion (cf. Edwards, 1985:6). The student population's mono-ethnic nature and their reasons for studying at the research site suggest a strong social identity among the pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers' positive attitudes towards the Afrikaans language were prominent within the data. For example, one pre-service teacher stated, "You must teach in your home language" (1:284), which shows strong beliefs regarding the MoI at South African schools.

Advocating for Afrikaans-only mother-tongue education could also be considered a potential indicator of higher ethnocentrism, especially when creating in-groups or forming strong social identities based on a shared ethnic characteristic such as language. For example, a pre-service teacher explained: "I think Afrikaans and English should be equal. Afrikaans is on the verge of extinction. Afrikaans children are being educated in English, why can't English children receive education in Afrikaans??" (1:435). Another pre-service teacher said he or she had chosen to study at the research site "mostly because it is Afrikaans and everyone else is, which is more comfortable". Other pre-service teachers agreed by explaining that "learning in a safe Afrikaans Christian environment has always been important for me" (2:1001) and "[x] is a safe" (2:1008) environment. The words "everyone else", "more comfortable" and "safe" being used in association with the word "Afrikaans" demonstrate how the pre-service teachers' language is interwoven with their sense of belonging and thus social identity. Other examples include the pre-service

teachers explaining that they had chosen to study at the research site "to help promote the Afrikaans culture in South Africa" (2:708), because "you feel you fit in" (2:438) and because it is "purely Afrikaans" (2:628). These statements align with what Levinson (1950, p. 50) calls "in-group-out-group distinction". The pre-service teachers' ideas of "fitting in" indicate their preference to study at an HEI where their mother tongue (Afrikaans) and Afrikaner culture are dominant, which demonstrates ethnic favouritism, the existence of a social identity among the pre-service teachers and a tendency to identify strongly with their own culture (Mangnale *et al.,* 2011; Sumner, 1906).

Other responses that could be considered potential indicators of higher degrees of ethnocentrism include the pre-service teachers' misperceptions about different cultures, language learning and diversity within the classroom. These misperceptions can be accounted for by conscious or subconscious personal prejudices (Vandeyar, 2008). An example of a misperception the pre-service teachers had is the following:

> *How does one work with a child of another culture if they refuse to speak to you, even when you speak English to them?*

The above quotation shows that the pre-service teachers' perception of multilingual learners' understanding within the classroom needs to be addressed. Other language-related misperceptions evident in the data include the pre-service teachers believing that "other languages should be developed to the proficiency [sic] of Afrikaans and English before it can be taught in any classroom" (3:114) and "it is not the teachers [sic] responsibility to learn a third language … Build schools for the children where they can be taught in their own mother tongue and in English like before 1994" (3:121).

Some of the misperceptions evident in the data can be viewed as wilful ignorance. Wilfully ignorant perceptions are due to conscious prejudice or racist comments, showing signs of lacking cultural intelligence or having a strong social identity as well as having intolerant attitudes towards 'others' (Amos & McCroskey, 1999; Harrison, 2012; Young *et al.*, 2017). For example, one pre-service teacher complained about the online questionnaire saying that "it is very uncomfortable to address these issues as Afrikaans speaking cultures are always blamed for most questions that were asked" (3:134). Another pre-service teacher also expressed anger at the content of the online questionnaire saying that "this was completely irrelevant and stupid. This will only breed racism, problems and leave people thinking about the wrong things" (3:50). These types of responses are not innocent misperceptions due to a lack of knowledge or information; they represent some pre-service teachers' inherent attitudes and beliefs that are informed by wilful ignorance and resistance to change. Another example of a participant being wilfully ignorant that shows high degrees of ethnocentrism is a pre-service teacher who claimed that "there are cultures that do nothing but cause problems … the people in these cultures I see as uncivilised and I would not care if it disappeared" (3:141). This response is blatantly racist and makes one question the pre-service teacher's ability to teach in a multicultural classroom. Another response that showed a high degree of ethnocentrism was as follows*:*

"My opinion is the diversity among the people of the world is the cause of many if not all of the world's problems and the first step to solve the problem is to enforce a single type of culture onto the whole world even if people see it as inhumane. If all the people of the world spoke one language and was of one religion there would be much less conflict. [T]his is an offensive comment to most who are not willing to think about it and claim diversity is beautiful.". (3:141)

The above quotation shows that the pre-service teacher's misperceptions stem from wilful ignorance, as each of the expressed beliefs shows signs of xenophobia, racism, religious fundamentalism, authoritarian ideologies and nationalism. The pre-service teacher's response can be considered ethnocentric, as he or she used "negative imagery and hostile attitudes regarding out-groups" (Levinson, 1950, p. 150) and hold hierarchical and authoritarian beliefs about society (Levinson, 1950; Wrench & McCroskey, 2003; Wrench *et al.,* 2006).

The relationship between pre-service teachers' attitude towards language-in-education-issues and their degree of ethnocentrism

Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between the respondents' degree of ethnocentrism (GENE score) and their attitudes towards language-in-education issues (LATS score). The results indicated that there was a statistically significant (<0.001) relationship between the pre-service teachers' GENE and LATS scores (i.e., the three constructs: "language politics", "limited English proficiency (LEP) intolerance" and "language support). The positive correlation coefficient (0.301) shows that the relationship's strength was medium (Field, 2018). The correlation coefficient between "language politics" and the GENE score was slightly stronger (0.387), whereas the correlation coefficient between "LEP intolerance" and the GENE score was marginally lower (0.294). These findings indicate that where the pre-service teachers scored higher on ethnocentrism (higher GENE score), they scored higher on the LATS scale (LATS, "LEP intolerance" and "language politics" scores). This means that their attitudes towards language-in-education issues reflected intolerance towards language diversity (i.e., learning additional languages, promoting African languages and multilingualism) and non- or limited-English-proficient learners. However, the correlation between the pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism and their attitudes and beliefs does not indicate causality. Further research is necessary to explain the possible cause of the relationship.

Establishing that a relationship exists between the pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism and attitudes toward language-in-education-issues aligns with Xu's (2012) prediction that if the language of the learners or the MoI is different from that of the pre-service teacher, he or she might have attitudes that could be detrimental to the learners' academic performance. This conclusion also aligns with Hooghe's (2008) argument that

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high degrees of ethnocentrism can be associated with intolerance towards diversity (i.e., multilingualism and multiculturalism).

8.   Conclusion

Gaining information about pre-service teachers' attitudes towards language-in-education issues is important, as various national and international research studies have found teachers' attitudes to affect their teaching practices as well as learners' language learning performance (e.g., Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997; Cain, 2012; Haukås, 2016; Incecay, 2011; Johnson, 1992, 1994; Kazempour & Sadler, 2015; Lombard, 2017; Vibulphol, 2004). Understanding the relationship between pre-service teachers' attitudes toward language-in-education issues and their degree of ethnocentrism can therefore also be valuable to teacher education programmes. HEIs with teacher education and training programmes should be acutely aware of the relationship between pre-service teachers' degree of ethnocentrism and their attitudes and beliefs about language-in-education issues. It could also provide them with useful information about the obstacles pre-service teachers might face when teaching in diverse settings, such as multilingual classrooms. Furthermore, being aware of this relationship could help HEIs avoid preparing pre-service teachers for a "monoculture, a mythical, culturally homogeneous aggregation" (Bullock, 1998, p. 1025) of learners.

Having pre-service teachers reflect and become more aware of their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour as well as their degree of ethnocentrism, could empower them with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that they refrain from discriminatory practices within their own multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Therefore, this study recommends that educational policies and the BEd curricula at HEIs, aim to create awareness amongst pre-service teachers about their attitude towards language-in-education issues and stimulate critical reflection about ethnocentrism. HEIs teacher education and training programmes should ensure that pre-service teachers accept diversity and are equipped to teach in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Lastly, I recommend that teacher education programmes and curricula place more emphasis on developing pre-service teachers' competence in using English as the MoI, owing to the tendency of teachers having to use English as the MoI within multilingual classrooms when it is neither their nor their learners' mother tongue. The pre-service teachers' attitudes towards language-in-education issues could be related to their own English proficiency; improving their competence in using English as the MoI could also improve their attitudes towards language matters.

9.   Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author declare no potential conflicts of interest to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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