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Reconfiguring Zimbabwe's Language Policy: The Case of Micro-Level Policy Appropriation at Selected Teachers' Colleges

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Abstract

In 2013 Zimbabwe promulgated a new constitution which gave official recognition to sixteen languages. The constitutional provisions on language were a culmination of years of advocacy and lobbying by formerly marginalised ethnolinguistic groups whose languages had no significant role to play in any meaningful domain.

Introduction

Education and language issues in Africa are very complex because of the multi-ethnic and multilingual nature of most African countries (Oudraogo,2000). Zimbabwe, like most countries in Africa, is a multilingual country. The country's multilingual nature has, over the years, presented challenges, especially for education. For many years there has been disgruntlement from some linguistic communities over what they perceived to be marginalisation of their languages, particularly in education. Dating back to the colonial period, the 'majority'/ 'minority' dichotomy has been used to marginalise those perceived to be minority language speakers. Successive language policies in both the pre-independence and post-independence epochs favoured English, Ndebele and Shona. During the colonial era, spilling over into independent Zimbabwe, *minoritised* languages did not play a significant role in any meaningful domain. Successive skewed language policies designated English as the sole official language, while Ndebele and Shona were designated as national languages.

Post 1980 up to 2013, Zimbabwe did not have an explicit language policy to which reference could be made. The country's language policy could be inferred from its Education Acts and ministerial policy pronouncements. However, it is imperative to note that not having an explicit policy document does not mean the absence of policy. Policy comprises not only "the explicit, written, overt, de jure, official and 'top-down' decision-making about language, but also the implicit, unwritten, covert, de facto, grassroots and unofficial ideas and assumptions about language" (Schiffman, 2006, p.11). It is imperative to note that language practices and ideologies constitute policy. Thus, policy can be detected from observable practices.

Prior to 2013, the 1987 Education Act and its amended version constituted the country's statutory/legal framework for language planning. The 1987 Education Act and its amended version, Zimbabwe Education Act of 2006, were perceived as being skewed in favour of the dominant (*majority*) languages while pushing the rest to the periphery. It, thus, became a source of contestation as it was perceived as entrenching the hegemonic dominance of English, Ndebele and Shona.

The language policy provisions contained in the two Education Acts, together with the observable practices and ideologies have always been a source of disgruntlement and contestation by some ethnolinguistic groups who have always felt that their languages were being marginalised. Thus, through their language associations, traditional and political leadership structures and the constitution-making process, these ethnolinguistic lobbied for the recognition and elevation of their languages. The lobbying culminated in the 2013 constitutional provisions that gave official recognition to sixteen languages, namely, Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa (Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No.20) Act, 2013). Subsequently, a Languages Bill (2016) and the Education Amendment Bill (2019) were promulgated to give effect to the constitutional provisions. Clause 8 of the Languages Bill "requires public schools to teach and avail education in officially recognised languages used in the regions in which the schools are situated" (Languages Bill, 2016, p.2). The Education Amendment Bill (2019) sought, inter alia, to repeal section 62 of the Education Act and substitute it as follows:

62 Languages to be taught in schools

1) *Every school shall endeavour to-*

a) *teach every officially recognised language.*

The provisions in the Languages Bill and the Education Amendment Act have implications for teacher education since the majority of the sixteen officially recognised languages were not being taught in Zimbabwean schools and teachers' colleges prior to 2013. Policy pronouncement and policy realisation are two different things. As noted by Hornberger (2006), to declare a language an official [officially recognised] while providing no opportunity for it to be a school language will not go far toward achieving the stated goal.

Problem statement

The field of language planning and policy (LPP) provides an array of research opportunities (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Zimbabwe's language policies have, over the years, presented a minefield of research for many scholars. Many scholars have interrogated the dominance of English over indigenous languages and the perceived marginalisation of formerly minoritised languages. With the promulgation of the 2013 constitutional provisions a shift in focus has become necessary, hence this study. Realisation of the new policy provisions hinges on the availability of teachers to teach the respective languages. Failure to train teachers for the newly introduced languages might result in 'declaration without implementation' (Bamgbose, 2000). As noted by Mohanty, Panda and Pal (2010), some explicit policy provisions have largely remained unimplemented. Indeed, lofty policy pronouncements have been made in many countries only to end at the level of declaration. Thus, this study sought to examine the language-in-education policy and practice nexus in Zimbabwe's teacher education. Teacher education is an important cog in the realisation of the new policy provisions. The success of language-in-education policies hinges on effective teacher professional development. "Teachers have to be seriously trained, especially primary teachers, as this is where the basis of education is laid" (Ambatchew, 2010, p.207).

Research questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the historical and/ or political context that gave rise to the 2013 constitutional provisions?
- What are the implications of the 2013 constitutional provisions in respect of language for Zimbabwe's teacher education?
- How is the new language policy being enacted at institutional level?
- What recommendations emanate from the study?

Brief literature review

This study is situated within the language policy and planning field (LPP). Language policy and planning are intertwined. The two invariably feed into each other. Language policy and planning are defined by Spolsky (2004, p.11) as "the formulation and proclamation of an explicit plan or policy, usually but not necessarily written in a formal document about language use." Language policies are usually, but not necessarily in the form of legislation.

They may be in "the form of a clause in a constitution, or a language law, or a cabinet document, or an administrative regulation" (Spolsky, ibid).

Language policy is a broad concept. It encompasses a wide range of issues such as language practices and beliefs (Menken & Garcia, 2004). As also noted by Wiley and Garcia (2016), language policies have been differentiated in terms of their degree of formality and explicitness. This conceptualisation of language policy is lucidly explained by Baldauf (2006) who notes that language policy may be in the form of very formal (overt) policy documents and pronouncements such as constitutions or in informal statements of intent, or may be left unstated (covert). Language policy, therefore, may be explicitly stated or may be covert. Thus, absence of explicit policy documents does not mean that there is no language policy.

Prominent scholars have written extensively on language policy issues. Indeed, the field has provided a fertile ground for research. As noted by Hornberger (1996), scholars from various fields have continually deepened and broadened the scope of LPP research while contributing new insights into the politics and goals of language policies whether planned or unplanned. Thus, this study provides further insights into the field of language planning and policy. It is an evaluative kind of study. As argued by Fettes (1997), there must be a link between planning and critical evaluation of language policy, with planning providing standards of rationality and effectiveness while evaluation tests the ideas against actual practice. It is in this context that this study sought to test the ideas of the 2013 constitutional provisions against actual practice.

The education domain, particularly teacher education, aroused interest for this study because the education domain is the most powerful domain in translating societal ideologies into practice. Yet not much research has been carried out on policy appropriation in education domains. Indeed, not much research has been done on micro-level policy appropriation in teacher education, particularly in Zimbabwe, hence this study. Teachers are an important cog in language policy appropriation.

The school domain plays a central role in language management. "Schooling is by its very nature a domain committed to language management" (Spolsky, 2007, p.7). As also noted by Menken and Garcia (2010), schools are primary sites for the implementation as well as contestation of language policies. Teachers are, therefore, an important cog in language policy appropriation.

Research methodology

The study employed the qualitative approach and the case study design. The choice of the qualitative approach was guided by the nature of the research questions. As noted by Punch and Oancea (2014), the matching or fit between the research questions and research methods should be as close as possible. Indeed, the question-method fit underpins most researches.

The study was exploratory and open-ended in nature. Focus was on participants' views and texts in the form of documents rather than numbers and statistics, hence the choice of the qualitative approach. The researcher chose the qualitative approach as it gives room for open-ended responses from participants so as to understand their experiences in depth. This interpretive approach is also called "thick-descriptive" because of the richness and detail to the discussion (Ronald, Darlene & Sakile, 2007).

The case study design was the preferred design because of its ability to deal with a variety of evidence such as documents, interviews and observations. Case studies are particularly suitable for investigating a contemporary phenomenon. They provide an in-depth analysis of a case. As noted by Cresswell (2014), case studies are a suitable design, especially in evaluation. The researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case. As this was an evaluative kind of study, focusing on selected teacher training colleges, the case study design was considered to be the most suitable. The study is a multiple case study.

Sampling was purposive. The two cases which, for anonymity, I chose to call **Case 1** and **Case 2**, were deliberately sampled on account of the fact that they are currently the only teacher training colleges that have broadened their curricula to include the training of teachers in formerly marginalised languages.

Participants included heads of departments, heads of subjects, lecturers and language activists representing such associations as the Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA). The participation of language activists was crucial since they played a key role in lobbying for the recognition of the indigenous languages in the constitution.

A multi method approach was employed in collecting data. This is because qualitative research tends to be multi method in focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were the major data collection methods. These complemented each other to bolster the emerging themes. In this way, triangulation was

assured. As noted by Yin (2014, p.17), a case study inquiry "relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion".

Explanation building and identification of emerging themes were employed in data analysis. Explanation building helped to establish causal links, specifically focusing on the how and why aspects. Causal links may reflect insights into a public policy process (Yin, 2014). Emerging themes became the categories for analysis. Pattern matching logic was employed in the identification of themes. To enhance credibility and validity, different sources of information were triangulated by examining evidence from various sources.

Theoretical framework

The study is situated within the language planning and policy (LPP) discourse. It examines language planning and policy issues using various lenses. Hence, it employs a multi-pronged theoretical framework. As noted by Ricento (2006, p.10), "There is no overarching theory of LP and planning, in large part because of the complexity of the issues which involve language in society."

The study is informed by the following theoretical frameworks; the ethnography of language policy (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Baldauf, 2005, 2016; Johnson & Ricento, 2013), Ruiz (1984)'s orientations and the Language Management Theory (Spolsky, 2004, 2018a, 2018b; Nekvapil, 2007; Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015).

Traditional language planning and policy research tended to focus on large-scale socio-political forces and policy documents created at national (macro) levels. This was a narrow conceptualisation of language planning and policy. The 1980s and 1990s saw a shift in conceptualisation. This shift in conceptualisation led to LPP studies which focus on the language planning efforts and the contexts in which they occur, hence the terms 'macro-planning' and 'micro-planning'. There was a shift that embraced an expanded conceptualisation of the field, from methods that focused on large-scale census to inform policy to researches that sought to shed light on the complexities of enacting LPP in local contexts. This study is situated within this narrative. It conceives LPP as a broad concept.

This study was mainly interested in micro-level policy appropriation at the two cases under study. It was considered prudent to examine the roles of various actors in policy appropriation. As noted by Pennycook, in Johnson (2009, p.140), "power does not solely rest

with the state, or within the policy text, but it is enacted by educational practitioners…" Hence, an ethnography of language policy and planning was considered to be an invaluable framework for this study. An ethnography of LPP views planning and policy issues as being multilayered. Ethnography can provide a thick description of language planning within communities, schools and other social institutions (Davis, 1999).

The study also drew on Ruiz (1984)'s orientations of language-as-problem, as -right, and as -resource. The language-as-problem orientation views the speaking of languages other than the dominant languages as a deficit that needs to be overcome if individuals are to be successful economically and politically. This orientation is informed, in large part, by the cultural deficit theory. Ruiz noted that the bulk of language planning efforts were intended to solve language problems. Language planning was, thus, seen as a problem-solving endeavour. This is a shift from the narrow focus on technical aspects such as standardisation to a broadened conceptualisation of language planning.

The language-as-right orientation views language as a right to be affirmed by members of linguistically diverse communities. "Language as a right can be defined in terms of personal, human, and legal or constitutional rights" (McNelly, 2015, p.7). The lobbying for the recognition of formerly marginalised languages was, in large part, premised on this orientation.

The last of Ruiz's orientations views language as a resource that needs to be managed, developed and conserved. Ruiz introduced this orientation after noting the limitations of the other two. The orientation places local communities at the centre of the language management process. It considers "language-minority communities as important sources of expertise" (Ruiz, 1984, p.28). Language as a resource acknowledges and promotes a pluralistic society as well as tolerance and cooperation between different linguistic groups. The 2013 constitutional provisions on language appear to be premised on this thinking. The language-as-resource orientation promotes linguistic diversity in schools. It views languages as social assets.

Another theory which guided the study is the *Language Management Theory* (Spolsky, 2004, 2009, 2018a, 2018b; Nekvapil, 2012, 2016; Nekvapil and Sherman, 2015). Language management is "the explicit and observable effort by someone, or some group that has or claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs" (Spolsky, 2009, p.4).

Spolsky (2004, 2009, 2018a) grounds his language management theory on the domain approach. He identifies the following domains as having their own policies- home or family, school, neighbourhood and church. In Spolsky's conceptualisation, in each domain some policy features are managed internally and others under the influence of forces external to the domain. He gives a central role to the school domain. "The school domain is probably the ultimate test of a theory of language management because schools are there basically to manage the language of their students" (Spolsky, 2004, p.114). Grounding the study, in part, on the language management theory helped in shedding light on the internal and external forces driving policy appropriation at the selected institutions.

Findings and discussion

Historical and socio-political context

Multilingual policy appropriation at the two cases is best understood when foregrounded by the historical and socio-political context. This is where the formulation arena is engaged, for it is in policy formulation that the historical, socio-political and ideological constructs are brought to the fore. An examination of the historical and socio-political context of the 2013 constitutional provisions has shown that various agents with varying, and sometimes opposing political goals and ideologies were involved in the formulation process. There were various actors that were vying for control over the policy discourse. These actors included advocacy/lobby groups and associations, government officials, traditional leaders and individuals.

Findings of the study have shown that past policies and practices in Zimbabwe have always been sites of tension and contestation among different ethnolinguistic groups. This is because, for many years, minoritised languages were pushed to the periphery in many domains. This was evident in policies and practices that existed prior to the 2013 constitutional provisions.

Formerly marginalised languages have had a long history of marginalisation, dating back to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The 'subjugation' of formerly minoritised ethnolinguistic groups, particularly in the Matabeleland Region, dates back to the period of King Mzilikazi's conquest in the late 1830s. This was the genesis of what historians like Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) describe as a pre-colonial form of a rainbow Ndebele nation. This narrative is a contested narrative. The formerly marginalised ethnolinguistic groups have

always viewed it as 'forced' assimilation. It is not surprising, therefore, that Zimbabwe's language policies have always been a contested terrain.

During the colonial period, English was the sole official language. Except for the infant module, it was the only medium of schooling and had to be acquired with fluency. Its dominance became subject to contestation for many years. However, a good number of Zimbabweans whose mother tongue is not English still prefer and take pride in enrolling their children at English medium only schools. They even take pride in having children who cannot converse in their own mother tongue. Being unable to speak their own mother tongue becomes a source of pride and a status symbol for their parents. Such ideologies are best understood within Gramsci (1980)'s construct of hegemony. "Ideological dominance and hegemony is 'perfect' when dominated groups are unable to distinguish between their interests and attitudes and those of dominant groups" (Van Dijk, 1998, p.10).

Alongside English, Ndebele and Shona also enjoyed a privileged status for many years, dating back to the colonial era. Ndebele and Shona have had a hegemonic hold over minoritised languages, dating back to the pre-independence period. Nowhere is this hegemonic hold more evident than in the 1987 Education Act. The 1987 Education Act has been the subject of contestation for many years because of its conferment of a privileged status on English, Ndebele and Shona at the expense of minoritised languages. Section 62 of the Act stipulated that;

1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the main languages of Zimbabwe, namely, Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:

a) Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of students is Shona; or

b) Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of students is Ndebele.

2) Prior to the fourth grade, either of the languages referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (1) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

3) From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction provided that Shona or Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal-time allocation basis as the English language.

4) In areas where minority languages exist, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in primary schools in addition to those specified in sub-sections (1), (2) and (3).

As evident above, the 1987 Education Act treated 'minoritised' languages with disdain. Their teaching was at the discretion of the Minister. The Act helped entrench hierarchisation of languages in the education domain. This triggered contestation and resistance from minoritised groups. After years of contestation and lobbying, the Act was amended in 2006. The amended Act had the following provisions:

Zimbabwe Education Act of 2006 (Chapter 25: 04)

62. Languages to be taught in schools

1) Subject to this section, all three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely, Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught on equal-time allocation basis in all schools up to form one level.

2) In areas where indigenous languages other than mentioned in subsection (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in addition to those specified in subsection (1).

3) Prior to Form One, any of the languages referred to in subsection 1) and 2) may be used as medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly understood by the pupils.

The teaching of formerly minoritised languages was still left at the discretion of the Minister in the amended Act. The provisions of the amended Act are best understood in tandem with Secretary's Circular Number 1 of 2002 which stipulates:

Minority Languages

These are languages spoken by relatively small indigenous groups in various parts of Zimbabwe. They include, but are not limited to, Kalanga, Tonga, Venda, Nambya and Sotho. These languages are currently being taught up to Grade 3. From January 2002, the languages will be assisted to advance to a grade per year until they can be taught at Grade 7. The annual progression of the classes will enable the necessary inputs to be made in advance. This includes teachers, classrooms and materials.

Ndebele and Shona

Shona and Ndebele are the two major languages.

The above developments were, perhaps, the first significant step towards the recognition of formerly marginalised languages. What is evident though is that the languages continued to play second fiddle to English, Ndebele and Shona until the landmark 2013 constitutional provisions. Whether the languages are now at par with the formerly dominant languages is subject to debate.

Theme of marginalisation

The historical and socio-political context of the 2013 constitutional provisions echoes the theme of marginalisation. It is a theme that sticks out like a sore thumb. It is a theme that reverberates across the pre-independence and the post-independence historical epochs. This marginalisation led to the formation of various lobby and advocacy groups, such as the Tonga Language Committee (TOLACO) which was formed in 1976 and the Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA) in 2001. These lobby groups/associations, in collaboration with the traditional leaders, language activists and scholars successfully lobbied for the recognition of their languages in the constitution. Not only that, they also lobbied for the teaching of these languages across all levels of education, including the tertiary level. As noted by the ZILPA chairperson during an interview with her, the association successfully lobbied the two ministries of education to enforce the teaching and learning of the formerly marginalised languages in schools, colleges and universities.

The 2013 constitutional provisions, thus gave impetus to micro-level efforts that started before the promulgation of the new constitution.

Deconstructing and reconstructing identities

Findings from the study have shown that cultural identity was at the epicentre of the fight against linguistic hegemony. The theme of cultural identity is one of the themes that emerged from this study. The marginalised communities sought to deconstruct and reconstruct their identities. The historical and socio-political context mirrors identity politics. The contestations, resistance and policy debates prior to new policy provisions were underpinned by an ethnolinguistic identity ideology. There was resistance and 'reclaiming' of territory. The guiding principle appears to have been the *territoriality principle/ imperative* (Myhill,

1999; De Schutter, 2008; Wells, 2016, 2019). "The territorial principle essentially ties provision of use of a language to the existence of a geographical concentration of users of that language" (Wells, 2016, p.158).

The territorial principle essentially seeks to ensure the protection and survival of languages. As noted by Myhill (1999, p.38), "In order to survive, languages need to be concentrated over physical space so as to be able to resist the competition of the intruding languages that happen to penetrate 'their' territory." This *ideology of language and territory* emphasises that in each territory, a particular language should be generally used in public circumstances and the general principle should be the historical antecedence of who got there first. Territoriality thus protects non-dominant languages from the threat of dominant languages. This principle seems to pervade the policy debates and discourses that dominated the period leading to the 2013 constitutional provisions. It should be noted that this principle has not been without criticism.

Implications of the constitutional provisions for Zimbabwe's teacher education

The second research question sought to examine the implications of the 2013 constitutional provisions for Zimbabwe's teacher education. The study found that it was not easy to examine the implications of the provisions in full, largely because of the vagueness of the provisions. Ordinarily, a constitution that recognises multilingualism should signal a shift from the past. The phrase *officially recognised* is vague. The 2012 draft intended to make the sixteen languages *official*, as opposed to *officially recognised*, as explicitly stated below:

Language provisions in the Draft Constitution

6. Languages

1) The following languages, namely, Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa, are the *official* languages of Zimbabwe (The Draft Constitution of Zimbabwe, July 18, 2012).

Authorial intentions are clear in the above draft. There is no doubt that the intention was to confer official status to the sixteen languages. The change in wording renders the policy provisions vague. The effect of the change was to water down the provisions and create opt-outs. This resonates with what Bamgbose (2000, p.105) refers to as "escape clauses which

give room for the violation of the policy." The phrase *officially recognised languages* is not the same as *official language*. The vagueness creates an opt-out for the government. There is no legal obligation for it to enforce implementation. It appears to be a deliberate strategy. One can conclude that there is "strategic avoidance of explicitness" (Fairclough, 2003, p.60). This is in contrast with the South African constitution, for example. The South African constitution explicitly designates 11 languages as official.

The vagueness of the policy begets different interpretations. Vagueness of the policy document opens it up to different interpretations. The provisions risk falling into the trap of being 'noble without a purpose' (Hadebe, 1996) or being grandiose for national propaganda (Bokamba, 2011). Variations in interpretation might make implementation difficult, "although any LPP will have socially situated variations in how it is understood and put into practice" (Grey, 2019, p.489).

The phrase '*officially recognised languages*' tends to obfuscate the policy intentions. However, if the policy is interpreted and understood in tandem with the Languages Bill and the Education Amendment Act, one major implication is that formerly marginalised languages will have to find a niche in the education domain. Teachers will have to be trained for the teaching of these languages. Teachers are an important cog in the implementation matrix. Teacher development and availability are, thus, key ingredients if the policy is to be put into practice, and not remain paper policy or just a symbolic gesture.

Policy Appropriation/Realisation

The third research question sought to find out how language policy was being enacted at institutional level. The question sought to address the realisation arena. The following were the findings.

Micro-level versus macro-level

Findings from the study have shown that the two cases are having to appropriate two seemingly disjunct and parallel policies. There is micro-level policy appropriation which seeks to promote formerly marginalised languages and a macro-level policy which came as a directive from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development in the midst of the local level policy implementation. The ministry directive makes it mandatory for all trainee teachers to learn at least three indigenous languages.

Prior to 2013, Case 1 and Case 2 initiated micro-level policy appropriation which sought to promote the visibility of formerly marginalised languages in schools and colleges. These had always been on the periphery for many years. While the two cases were in the midst of implementing their locally-initiated policies, their parent ministry issued what one may call *the three-language policy*. Thus, two seemingly disjunct policies came into being and are competing for space.

The micro-level policy appropriation followed years of lobbying and advocacy by formerly marginalised groups.

> Through ZILPA 's lobby and advocacy activities, engagement meetings were being held with administrative staff, especially college principals through their academic boards. In 2012, ZILPA and chiefs from different language groups engaged the then Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Head Office to exert more pressure on them to introduce the formerly marginalised languages in their curricula. In response, the ministry gave a directive in 2012 instructing Case 1 to introduce three formerly marginalised languages. In 2013, Venda, Sotho and Kalanga were introduced. Case 2 followed suit two years later when they introduced Kalanga, Nambya and Tonga. (Questionnaire response from ZILPA chairperson).

As evident in the above quotation, policy appropriation in the two cases under study is, by and large, micro-level driven. It is largely informed by a bottom-up approach. As noted by Siiner (2012), for language policy to have a meaningful impact, it is important to leave space for 'local' initiatives, interpretations and appropriations. Indeed, 'local' initiatives have driven the expanded language curricula at the two cases. Some of the people who figured prominently in lobbying and advocacy are educators, particularly from a marginalised linguistic background. Teachers/educators are critical in language revitalisation efforts (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Brown, 2010). Educators at both cases helped shape policy.

The initiative that was taken by the two colleges dovetails with Brown (2010)'s concept of *reinscribing* or *reinscription* which

> denotes efforts to incorporate languages that were previously excluded or ignored in education back into the general socio-cultural context of the school. Reinscribing strives to make previously "invisible" languages visible again… (p. 30).

It should be noted that some of the languages that are now being 'reinscribed' were once taught in schools during the colonial era but, for some reason, were discontinued at some stage. The policy initiatives at the two institutions came as a welcome development for the re-inscription of these languages.

The expanded language curricula at the two cases were driven by the need to accommodate formerly marginalised languages. The 2002 language-in-education policy necessitated the training of teachers for these languages. The initiatives were intended to address a manpower gap. Findings have shown that the 2013 constitutional provisions on language gave impetus to grassroots efforts that had already taken root.

On the other hand, the *three-language policy* came as a directive from the parent ministry. It is macro-level driven. While breaking the news about this development, the Chronicle Newspaper reported thus,

> Students at teachers' colleges are now required to learn at least three indigenous languages to ensure that they can be deployed anywhere in the country, a Cabinet Minister said yesterday (in reference to 17 February, 2018). The new policy takes effect when the new intake of students starts and principals at teachers' colleges have already been told about the changes. (*The Chronicle*, 18 February 2018).

The policy appears to be noble on paper as it seeks to ensure that teachers can function in any part of the country upon completion of their studies. The policy came against the background of concerns, particularly in Matabeleland, about the deployment of teachers to areas where they could not function in the local languages. However, the policy risks falling into the trap of being 'a noble idea without a purpose' (Hadebe, 1996). The conceptualisation of the policy does not appear to have taken into consideration some important factors, such as the different settings that colleges find themselves in. The model that the two cases have initiated and adopted is a simple model of enrolling first language speakers of the respective languages for training in those languages. In contrast, the *three-language policy* envisions the learning of three indigenous languages, two of which would be 'foreign' to the majority of the students. A shadow is cast on the feasibility of the policy. The policy risks falling into the trap of being a *propaganda policy* (Bamgbose, 2011).

Success stories

Laying the foundation: Successes have been scored in policy realisation. The starting point by the local actors in policy implementation was to craft syllabi and prepare teaching material. Local resource persons were engaged in getting foundational data for the crafting of syllabi.

Expanded language curricula: Case 1 offers seven indigenous languages in its expanded language curriculum. The languages offered are Kalanga, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sotho, Tonga and Venda. The inclusion of these languages has been done in phases, starting with

Kalanga, Sotho and Venda in 2013, followed by Tonga and Shangani in 2018. On the other hand, Case 2 offers Kalanga, Nambya, Ndebele, Shona and Tonga.

In both cases a lot of work has been done in sourcing teaching and learning materials, with varying levels of success. Such materials include voice recorders, digital cameras and textbooks. Relevant teaching material was also gathered and uploaded on DVDs, as in Case 1, for example.

Collaboration: The two cases under study have been collaborating with each other through visits and workshopping each other, as well as collaborating with other stakeholders. Sharing of notes and experiences has helped the two cases build a strong foundational base.

Staffing: The area of staffing has been a mixed bag. Case 1 boasts of six qualified lecturers for six of the formerly marginalised languages, whereas Case 2 has had to make do with first language speakers of the respective languages who were originally recruited for other areas. Case 2 has had to redeploy staff. Staffing challenges in these areas remain a challenge as they have been losing staff to universities of late. Universities are also reconfiguring their curricula by including the formerly marginalised languages.

Teacher output: Both cases have had good teacher output for the respective languages. Students for these languages have successfully graduated in numbers. This has been a milestone. While the manpower gap remains a challenge in schools, at least a start has been made to address the challenge Past policies have always been dogged by a mismatch between policy and practice. This has been the bane of many African countries.

Sign language: The offering of sign language is another success story. Case 2 started offering sign language way before the promulgation of the amended constitution. The constitutional provisions on language have given impetus to this initiative.

Challenges faced

Resource constraints: The expanded language curriculum initiative has not been without challenges. One such challenge has been resource constraints. The majority of the languages on offer post 2013 have never been taught before. Consequently, there were hardly any teaching and any learning resources to talk about when the expanded language curriculum commenced. Shortage of resources has been compounded by the attitude of some publishers

who, in the past, did not consider publishing books in formerly marginalised languages viable.

Manpower shortage: In both cases manpower shortage has been a major constraint to effective policy appropriation. This has been exacerbated by a recruitment freeze by the government for public sector institutions, although it has been eased of late. Case 1 is in a bit of a privileged position compared to Case 2 in that it has lecturers who are specialists for the respective languages, some of them with Masters degrees. The only challenge is understaffing. Case 2 has had to reassign staff from their areas of specialisation. These have been redeployed on account of being first language speakers of the respective languages. This demonstrates resourcefulness, what one may describe as *thinking outside the box*.

Negative attitudes: Findings have shown that some of the first language speakers of the formerly marginalised languages, particularly Kalanga, have negative attitudes. Some Kalanga-speaking students use 'Kalanga' as a conduit for enrolment and switch over to other areas upon enrolment. They prefer Ndebele over Kalanga. In contrast, Tonga and Nambya are well-embraced by their speakers. The preference of Ndebele by Kalanga students is best understood within the context of *hegemony*. Language is essentially a social construct which rests upon conceptual elements such as belief systems and attitudes.

Variations in orthography: Variations in orthography have presented challenges for some languages. This has been so particularly for the Kalanga language. Standardised Kalanga favours students who come from areas whose dialect is close to, if not the same, as the standard Kalanga. Variations in orthography have presented spelling challenges for some students.

Bunching and 'marginalisation': Another challenge has been the bunching and subtle/covert 'marginalisation' of the formerly marginalised languages. In Case 1, for example, local languages are bunched together as a cluster, whereas English, Ndebele and Shona are not clustered. This creates a dichotomous relationship of *us* and *them*. This dichotomisation is best understood within the context of *othering*. In this situation, "people are grouped and minoritised through discursive practices that categorise them as different" (Nilsen et al, 2017, p.40).

Unfavourable teacher deployment: Participants indicated that, after graduation, their products were randomly deployed. The majority were deployed to schools where their languages of

specialisation were not being taught. This defeats the whole essence of the policy goals and shows dissonance/discord among the various actors. There is no collaboration. The user ministry does not appear to take the initiative with the seriousness it deserves.

Prohibitive distances: Case 2 has had to suspend the enrolling of Shangani and Tonga owing to prohibitive distances to schools where practising students are deployed. The harsh economic environment has impacted negatively on the expanded language curriculum initiative.

Macro-level policy appropriation

The *three-language policy* which came as a directive from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development is a relatively new phenomenon, and, as such, it may be too early to give a comprehensive evaluation of the policy. The policy has met with mixed fortunes. A notable success is that it has helped in fostering appreciation of formerly marginalised languages. Tonga, in particular, has been well-embraced by many students. A large number of students have tended to opt for it. The policy has presented implementation challenges though. In the majority of cases the languages are taught to students who are encountering them for the first time. They are more like *foreign* languages. Educators at the two cases are not equipped to teach 'foreign' languages. Not surprisingly, the policy faced subtle/covert resistance at the initial stages of implementation. It is still not popular with the implementers as it has created an extra load to lecturers who were already implementing an expanded language curriculum. It is perceived by the micro agents as creating an additional burden to disgruntled personnel who already have salary issues with their employer. Timetabling has been a challenge, as the two parallel policies are fighting for space in an already congested timetable.

Conclusion and recommendations

LPP has transformed and no longer focuses on technical aspects of planning. Various dynamics are at play at the macro and micro levels. The ideological and socio-political contexts have a bearing on policy formulation and realisation. Indeed, language planning and policy is a contested terrain. The study has shown that language policy and planning is multilayered. The layers include supranational agencies, micro agents, institutions and classroom practitioners. As such, there should be harmony across all levels for effective policy appropriation.

Findings have shown that Zimbabwe's LLP is fragmented, right from policy creation to policy realisation. There is some dissonance/discord among the various layers. The study thus proposes a new model, a *roots-of-a tree* model for effective policy realisation. This is in addition to the *onion metaphor* (Ricento &Hornberger, 1996; Hornberger &Johnson, 2007) and Blommaert et al (2009)'s co-construction theory. Language policy should be understood as a multi-layered and multi-agent produced process. Stakeholder consultation is important right from policy creation to policy realisation. Macro-level policy imposition is likely to face resistance. The study recommends collaboration among various actors, like roots of a tree. There is need to harmonise grassroots/micro-level initiatives with macro-level planning.

Findings have shown that the two cases under study have made a significant start in appropriating a broadened multilingual curriculum. While successes have been scored, there is need to address challenges faced. Resources need to be marshalled if policy is to be fully realised. The two cases need to continue forging synergies with key stakeholders such as language associations for the production of teaching and learning resources.

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