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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**CURRICULUM 2005 AND (POST)MODERNISING AFRICAN  
LANGUAGES: THE QUANTUM LEAP**

Minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree:  
Master of Philosophy specialising in Applied Language Studies.

by

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been submitted before to any institution for assessment purposes.

Further, I have acknowledged all sources used and have cited these in the bibliography.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly I thank God for guiding me throughout this profoundly enriching period of my life.

Secondly I wish to extend my sincere thanks to my parents, Caiaphas Sandlane Mahlalela and Martha Hleziphi Mahlalela for being 'the wind beneath my wings' throughout the period of my studies.

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the status of ALs in the school context. In this thesis I argue that AL syllabi and textbooks are not at the same cognitive, affective and psycho-social level as their English counterparts. The important role of the mother tongue as a powerful platform for cognitive and psycho-social development of the African child is also discussed. My argument is that the low status of ALs is visible in the textbooks that are in schools. With the introduction of the new Curriculum, there arises a need to write new AL textbooks. As the expertise is lacking among AL speakers to write postmodern textbooks as envisaged by Curriculum 2005, I propose a collaboration between AL and English practitioners as a necessary and feasible transitory step in the development of new AL textbooks.

## A lesson learned

*“If your life is ever going to change for the better, you’ll have to take chances. You’ll have to get out of your rut, meet new people, explore new ideas and move along unfamiliar pathways. In a way the risks of self-growth involve going into the unknown, into an unfamiliar land where the language is different and customs are different and you have to learn your way around...the paradox is that until we give up all that feels secure, we can never really trust the friend, mate or job that offers us something. True personal security does not come from without, it comes from within. When we are really secure, we must place our total trust in ourself. If we reject deliberate risk-taking for self-growth, we will inevitably remain trapped in our situation.”*

*(Cited in Giddens 1991:78)*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Naming the Problem

Lague (1995:1, citing Wilhem 1993:12; Hope 1988:12 and Heard 1990:69) writes that nearly three and a half centuries of 'evil, racist social engineering has left South Africa an 'expression of policy ... a condition.' South Africa is further described as a country which distorted human dignity and social justice" in which all have been 'lessened, and dehumanised.'

The 'social fracturing' practices (Alexander 1989:7) are evident in a number of areas in South Africa, including the education sector. Through a number of means, amongst the strongest being the use of a divisive language policy, as well as school textbooks designed to support these designs, the apartheid government was generally successful in furthering its objectives.

In an effort to redress past imbalances and equalise educational opportunities, the new Government, through Constitutional means gives official status to all eleven languages spoken in South Africa. The new Language in Education policy advocates for the modernisation and development of ALs<sup>1</sup>. Curriculum 2005 is aimed at equalising education opportunities for all sectors of societies.

It is against this backdrop that this thesis aims to investigate how historical and developmental circumstances affected the education of AL children negatively. My experience as a language teacher working in this context, coupled with involvement in curriculum development has made me aware of the limitations in linguistic, cognitive and psycho-social orientations of the African child. Research and theoretical underpinnings will support my line of thought.

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<sup>1</sup> Given the frequency of use, the term African languages will throughout the thesis be abbreviated as ALs.

In this thesis I wish to particularly address the pedagogical problem of ALs in the classroom. It is a common perception that AL literacy programmes fail to develop children's cognitive and psycho-social faculties through linguistic means. At the heart of the problem lies the inferior training of a majority of AL speaking teachers which precludes them from developing a critical and reflective mindset. This condition has been highlighted by the demands for sophisticated engagement with areas of knowledge in Curriculum 2005. My hunch is that under-qualified teachers, trained in another paradigm are being asked to give what they do not have as their culture of non-reflective teaching is at the opposite end of the ideals set out by Curriculum 2005. It is imperative that these under-prepared teachers require comprehensive and supportive teaching aids in the form of a new generation of textbooks as a guide through this progressive curriculum.

## 1.2 The Hypothesis

My main hypothesis is that unless teachers of ALs are being equipped at a psycholinguistic level to cope with the tenets of a highly sophisticated AL curriculum, the prognosis for progress in other sectors of the curriculum must be regarded as unpromising. As a corollary I hypothesise that unless comprehensive AL mother tongue textbooks in this new paradigm are being researched and produced, the crossing of the threshold may be impossible for the vast majority of teachers and children.

## 1.3 Rationale for the Research

My interest in this research has been a result of my involvement in teaching English and siSwati at high school level in Swaziland. In the Masters course work I did in 1997 at UCT, I have since been enlightened about the indisputable role of the mother tongue in the development of the cognitive and psycho-social faculties of children and that if it is neglected, it could lead to the state of semilingualism<sup>2</sup> - a linguistic malaise, which is already widespread in Africa.

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<sup>2</sup> Appel and Muysken (1987:107) define the concept of semilingualism as someone who speaks two languages but both at a lower level than monolingual speakers.

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neglected, it could lead to the state of semilingualism<sup>2</sup> - a linguistic malaise, which is already widespread in Africa.

My curiosity in this field was further stimulated by my involvement in materials development in siSwati.<sup>3</sup>

#### **1.4 Significance and Relevance of the Study**

I believe that the study will be relevant at a time when the Government has legislated the move to empower all the official languages of South Africa. More importantly, I believe that the academic progress of AL children is directly related to the level of cognitive elaboration attained in the mother tongue.

#### **1.5 Contextual Validity of the Study**

The study is based on carefully constructed psycho-linguistic and sociolinguistic principles. These theoretical constructs inform my exploration of the link between language development and socio-economic advancement.

#### **1.6 Synopsis**

The thesis is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter two focuses on the historical condition surrounding ALs prior to colonialism. In this chapter I argue that ALs were used and developed consistent with the social and cultural reproduction of the society in areas such as science, medicine and philosophy.

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<sup>2</sup> Appel and Muysken (1987:107) define the concept of semilingualism as someone who speaks two languages but both at a lower level than monolingual speakers.

<sup>3</sup> I was involved in the transposition of learning materials from English blueprints into siSwati. Working with these progressive texts was most revealing as it conscientised me to the full potential for profound thought in my mother tongue. The title of the siSwati series is 'Sivula Emasango' and it will be available in schools as from the year 2000.

mother tongue as the language of instruction in the early years has proved advantageous, especially where the development of cognitive faculties and psycho-social integration with regard to culture is concerned. They point out that children have to acquire competence in the mother tongue before starting to operate extensively in second language. Failure to fully develop the mother tongue invariably leads to stunted cognitive development.

The semilinguistic condition that results from bilinguals who have to function without a fully developed mother tongue is seen to be at the root of what is wrong in our education system.

Chapter three begins with a review of Bantu language policy, a policy which was designed to keep Africans in tribal bondage and to prepare the child for her role in a subordinate society. The new Language in Education policy, which gives official status to all eleven languages spoken in South Africa and the new child-centred curriculum, which employs the communicative approach, are acknowledged as positive steps by the Government in the development of ALs. However, for AL learners, teachers and speech communities, such a progressive, (post)modern curriculum brings more problems than solutions. Because of the unequal education system that deliberately aimed at inhibiting the cognitive growth of African children, there is lack of expertise in embracing the ideals of Curriculum 2005. AL speakers face a huge challenge in crossing the bridge from the old to the new curriculum.

Chapter four contains a discussion of theoretical constructs that underpin curriculum development. In this chapter I look at some of the different viewpoints that curriculum development can be based on. The fundamental argument is that curriculum does not only include content, but that the context (the political, social, and economic domains of society) plays a huge role in its development, as it has a direct bearing on the citizenship of a country. I also demonstrate that schooling is likely to promote the views that the dominant order seeks to establish and sustain. The knowledge, truth and power that become the content of curriculum are all intertwined in the social order of society—the apartheid education system being a case in point.

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In chapter five I look at Curriculum 2005 as a (post)modern document, and as such highlight some of the problems and challenges this progressive and sophisticated curriculum poses to AL learners, teachers and their speech communities. I argue in this chapter that the attempt by Government to equalise educational opportunities and the advocacy for multiculturalism seem to have been superceded by globalisation and the concomitant marginalisation of ALs and cultures. These modernising influences necessitated an enquiry into the implications for ALs. This leads to a further question: to what extent are these languages able to act as linguistic conduits for modern discourse and thought?

Chapter six opens with a focus on an argument for the centrality of the textbook in teaching and learning and the need for a (post)modern generation of AL textbooks. I then propose that the lack of expertise among AL speakers to write books that encapsulate these qualities necessitates a transitory step in textbook writing. With some qualification, I argue for the use of well-researched and well-structured English blueprints as source material for AL textbooks.

## 2 The Colonial Legacy and the Dormant Potential of African Languages

*“Africans can re-discover their  
genius only in  
their own languages” (Prah 1995:71)*

### 2.1 Introduction

There is a persistent myth that “The Dark Continent” only came to consciousness with the arrival of European colonisers. Historically over several centuries ALs have been portrayed as undeveloped, yet these languages were rich in metaphor and images and there was a strong, abstract dimension to them. They could capture all the experiences of the African societies. The contact with European languages severely impeded the evolution of ALs. The colonial languages were empowered to the detriment of the ALs. ALs lost important domains such as storytelling, song, praise singing and oral histories as cultures were partially abandoned when European customs and religions were embraced. Colonialism brought about stagnation and later a decline in ALs’ evolution. In other words, with the intervention of Europeans “the word” in Africa lost its totality.<sup>1</sup>

Economic, social and political arguments have been offered for the privileged position of European languages in African schools. In this chapter I would like to revisit some of these arguments. There have also been psycho-social arguments for the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction, at least in the first few years of primary school. The

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<sup>1</sup> In the poem *A bard of the Bambara Komo society* the ‘word’ is described as ‘total, it cuts, excoriates, forms, modulates, perturbs, maddens, cures or directly kills, amplifies or reduces according to intention, it excites or calms the soul.’ (Gleason 1994). This unknown poet ascribes powers and qualities to his language and suggests a common understanding and appreciation of the creative power of the word in traditional societies.

tongue as medium of instruction, at least in the first few years of primary school. The quote above from Prah (1995:71) mirrors my own belief that African children can unleash vast reservoirs of untapped energies in their own languages. This position will be substantiated by related research that has been done in Africa and Europe. As a siSwati speaker I will then proceed to argue for the use of siSwati as a medium of instruction and its cultivation as a high status subject in siSwati speech communities.

As a point of departure I will follow the line of argument assumed by Roy-Campbell (1997) in her paper "The Language of Schooling: De-constructing Myths About African Languages" as it offers a fine overview of the myths woven around the subject.

## 2.2 African Languages in Pre-colonial Times

Roy-Campbell (1997:3) states that in pre-colonial African societies the languages developed consistent with the social and cultural transformation of society. She cites Samir Amin (1977) who points to the technical vocabulary with an underlying conceptual framework that emerged in these languages in correspondence with the prevalence of skilled handicrafts in these societies. ALs also embodied the experiences and culture of the community which were passed down to the younger members of the society, from one generation to the next, through the oral tradition. "Although one of the oldest written forms of language was developed in Africa, most ALs were oral and embodied the experiences and culture of the community which were passed on to the younger members of the society, from one generation to the next, through storytelling and apprenticeship." (Roy-Campbell 1997:4) According to Roy-Campbell (1997:4) education through these languages involved understanding the history of the society and appropriate modes of behaviour through praise songs, legends and myths, part of the story-telling by the elders of the society. Proverbs and riddles were used to sharpen children's wit and to develop reasoning and decision making abilities. These idiom rich languages were filled with conventional wisdom and had a strong moral element to them. In pre-colonial African

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the immediate environment (local geography, plants and animals) and the ability to identify both harmful as well as beneficial elements were also important aspects of African education. (Moumouni; Fafunwa 1982 cited in Roy-Campbell 1997:3). These rich cultural activities and elementary scientific disciplines were in place before colonialism, served by linguistic codes developed to appropriate level. It is therefore fallacious that Europeans colonised nations whose linguistic patterns represented only basic concrete forms of communication.

Cheikh Diop cited in Roy-Campbell (1997:8) was one of the foremost African thinkers engaged in reclaiming an African past that had been buried under the European narratives that came to be accepted as the history of Africa. He has documented achievements of Africans, during the age of antiquity, in mathematics, chemistry, architecture, and medicine, all areas which required advanced technical vocabulary and scientific conceptual frameworks. Diop has highlighted scientific contributions of the Black Egyptian world to Greece and the unacknowledged achievements borrowed from Egyptian science and philosophy. Roy-Campbell (1997:8) remarks that despite Diop's voluminous writings, most of Diop's work, if any, is not taught in African universities. All of his books were published in Europe in French, and the English translations were produced in the United States of America.

Ivan Sertima is also cited by Roy-Campbell (1997:9) as another person who made an attempt to collect the wealth of material which documents the diverse achievements of African peoples in areas of science, technology, mathematics, agriculture and other realms of human endeavours, prior to European contact with the African continent, that for centuries, have been invisible to, or unacknowledged by the West.

Walter Rodney cited in Roy-Campbell (1997:9) described the process through which Europeans deskilled Africans. Roy-Campbell (1997:9) describes the accounts of both Rodney and Sertima as "a testament to the vast capabilities of African peoples realised through the indigenous ALs". However, "through negating these achievements, erasing them from the history of African peoples, Europeans have been able to construct an

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Rodney and Sertima as “a testament to the vast capabilities of African peoples realised through the indigenous ALs”. However, “through negating these achievements, erasing them from the history of African peoples, Europeans have been able to construct an image of Africans as uncivilised peoples, with no history or comprehensible language before their souls were saved by European missionaries.” It appears to me that the aim of the Europeans was to eliminate what was African, not to build on it.

With the incursion of the Europeans, first as missionaries then as colonial administrators, the objectives of education and the uses of ALs changed. Campbell (1997:4) states that although African elders continued to relate their legends and myths and develop the young ones’ awareness of their environment, *the value* placed on these activities and languages decreased. The new emphasis was on the successful advancement of the Europeans’ evangelistic mission - the propagation of the gospel “to win new souls for Christ” [Fafunwa (1982) cited in Roy-Campbell (1997:5)]. Language was very important in this venture since the missionaries knew that in order to reach the souls of Africans; they had to use a language that they understood. Most colonial territories also had the language of their colonial rulers imposed upon them in areas of administration and formal education during the period of colonial rule.

From the perspective of these Europeans, the activities and languages worth recording began with their contact with this “Dark Continent”. Africa was presented as comprising peoples speaking a multitude of tongues which did not have written forms. One of the first initiatives therefore, undertaken by some missionaries according to Roy-Campbell (1997:6) was to develop orthographies for some of the unwritten languages they encountered, or transliterate existing orthographies into Latin script. The rendering of ALs into written forms by different groups of missionaries has been termed “the invention of ethnicity and languages” by Ranger (1985), [Makoni 1996 cited in Roy-Campbell (1997:6)]. According to these authors “mishearings and faulty transcriptions by missionaries occurred across the African continent, resulting in a multitude of dialects of

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Roy-Campbell (1997:7) further states that European journeys of exploration into Africa in the 18<sup>th</sup> century have been characterised as “large scale operations in myth-making” about Africa. Pieterse (1992) cited in Roy-Campbell (1997) also points out that in the literature on exploration, Africans are mentioned primarily as part of the landscape or obstacles to exploration, despite the fact that they aided the European explorers as guides, intermediaries, interpreters and other facilitators. The indigenous people were described as primitive heathens, inhabiting a Dark Continent, who needed to be “brought to light”.

Madden (1982) cited in Roy-Campbell (1997) also states that Europeans were able to appropriate without obstruction whatever knowledge or skills they found in African societies among African peoples, thereby increasing their own knowledge base while portraying the African as an inferior being with low capability for learning new things. To deconstruct some of the myths that are held about ALs, Roy-Campbell (1997:10) states that most African societies were rooted in oral traditions, which relied on passing wisdom of the society, through narratives, by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Although there is evidence that some African narratives were transcribed into Arabic characters dating back to 7<sup>th</sup> century, ALs were only rendered in a form accessible to Europeans when the missionaries scripted them using Latin orthography. Once the missionaries rendered ALs into script they embarked on producing dictionaries and grammars for these languages. “In some senses, one might say that Europeans appropriated and constructed some of the ALs for their own purposes.” (Roy-Campbell 1997:10)

Presently all African countries use the European languages English, Portuguese or French, which are those of their former colonial masters, in nearly all their official business, and almost to the exclusion and to the detriment of their national AL. Among the multilingual countries, Tanzania seems to be the only country which up to now has adopted a clear policy aimed at rendering the national language the only official language of that country. In other words all countries are today “linguistically dependent” (Mateene, 1979:11) on Western Europe. According to Mateene (1979:12) one is said to

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business, and almost to the exclusion and to the detriment of their national AL. Among the multilingual countries, Tanzania seems to be the only country which up to now has adopted a clear policy aimed at rendering the national language the only official language of that country. In other words all countries are today “linguistically dependent” (Mateene, 1979:11) on Western Europe. According to Mateene (1979:12) one is said to be dependent upon or protected by someone else only in a field where one is defective or poor. Thus, for instance, the low proportion of Africans of economic means makes African countries economically dependent on Europe, but in the domain of languages, “people should only borrow the languages of others if they do not have their own or if they have emigrated to a foreign country.”

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to point out the effects of privileging European languages in African countries to the detriment of national ALs. I will also demonstrate the merits of using the ALs as MOI in the first few years of primary school and as subjects throughout schooling. By contrast, I will also discuss some of the arguments which have been put forward for the importance of European languages.

The first argument stems from a belief that ALs are not sufficiently developed for use at an instructional level at Junior Primary Level. Mateene (1979:25) states that a language is a means of expression, and it always has the mechanism which enables it to express whatever the speaker wants it to express. According to him if knowledge has been conceived and learnt through one language, it can always be interpreted and rendered into any other language if that language is *stretched* to accommodate the concepts. Thus, no language is really more privileged than another. Linton, cited in Prah (1995:40), is also of the opinion that there is abundant evidence that any idea can be conveyed in any language, “the differences lie in whether the society has been familiar enough with the idea, or sufficiently interested, to coin a single term for it. He gives the following example to illustrate his point: ‘to convey the idea of an airplane in an Aboriginal Australian dialect would require several hundred words, while in English a single word

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and the fact that it was introduced without any preliminary linguistic research regarding the translation of concepts into Kirundi". But in Mateene's opinion the poverty or underdevelopment of ALs is quite voluntary. These languages are poor because Africans do not feel the need to enrich them by using them in fields such as education or translation, which are all ways of language enrichment and development. He continues by pointing out that "it is up to our own free will to develop and enrich our languages by means of translation. Instead of dropping our languages in favour of European languages, we should develop our languages". (1979:26)

Roy-Campbell (1997:2) discusses the effects of the absence of indigenous ALs. She states that even though ALs will continue to be spoken by the vast majority of the populations of African countries, their status will become decreased as they are reduced to fulfilling limited functions for indigenous speakers of those languages. At the same time, the culture and self-worth as embodied in the languages of those who do not speak the European languages, the majority of the populations in African countries, will also face greater devaluation as these people will be unable to fully participate in the national affairs and development of their countries. She further asserts that there will be a loss of much of the indigenous knowledge which is contained in these ALs. "If the caretakers of this knowledge, the traditional healers, religious and spiritual leaders, do not reproduce themselves by passing their knowledge on to the younger generation, and if the repositories of this knowledge, the indigenous languages, have not been formalised, this knowledge will face the possibility of disappearing."(Ibid.p2)

The second argument for the retention of European languages as MOI in African schools is the belief that the choice of indigenous national languages is politically a highly divisive undertaking. Hyltensam and Stroud (1993) have cited this as a problem in Mozambique since most of the vernacular languages present a wide number of varieties that cannot be ignored, particularly during the process of materials development. It is argued that choosing one language as the national language, particularly in multilingual countries, will be interpreted by some part of the population as the rejection of other languages, and it will be seen as encouraging tribalism. Mateene (1979:34) points out that

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the problem of multilingualism, if it is one, can be solved in Africa. According to him in every African country with language diversity, there are a small number of main languages, which are often known by the speakers of the numerically smaller languages. He therefore suggests that these main languages can be official languages of government, “while the right of locally limited use is accorded to the minority languages, which could be used, perhaps as languages of primary education to allow children to do their first learning of writing and reading in a mother tongue.”

South Africa has ‘solved’ the problem of diversity by identifying eleven official languages. There is also a new Language in Education policy which promotes additive multilingualism.<sup>3</sup> However, there are countries, like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland which can be described as linguistically homogenous, but where English rather than Tswana, Sotho or Swati respectively still remains the MOI right from the beginning of schooling. In a trenchant article on “Why the African National Languages Can Never Break Through” (1990 cited in Prah 1995:65), the Ugandan linguist R. Mukama draws attention to the dilemma of the African elite. Using Swaziland and Botswana as examples he points out that “with the end of colonial rule, instead of starting off with their own languages in a comprehensive fashion, the elite stuck to English.” I think that the reason for retaining English in countries such as Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland is understandable. The need for an international language must be met. We must be able to communicate with the rest of the world, not least with the rest of Africa. Access to knowledge is also involved and English scores heavily. All countries have this problem and even large and powerful countries find it necessary to teach foreign languages at school. Japan is an example: although it is one of the richest countries in the world, with 120 million native Japanese speakers and an indigenous literary culture fourteen hundred years old, it is nevertheless found necessary (or at least expedient) that every Japanese child in high school should learn English.

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<sup>3</sup> with an additive approach, the child’s mother tongue is used from the beginning of education, and continues to be used as a language of teaching for at least 50% of teaching time throughout schooling. One or more additional languages, such as English, are added to this and do not replace the mother tongue in all learning areas.

It should be borne in mind that the needs of tertiary education and higher secondary education must be met. Most of the books in significant libraries are in English. It is also a necessity to meet the requirements of the law and the legislation. There is a need of a language of record in which laws of the land are to be drafted. Furthermore, the needs of business, commerce, science and technology must be met, given their international dimension. English is already well entrenched in these areas.

Clearly English is of importance, particularly for people to access learning in many fields, to which the knowledge of English opens doors. One is able to further one's studies if one acquires the English language, and even universities that in the past used Afrikaans for instance, are now shifting to English. It is also a linking language within some countries such as South Africa and a language of wider communication with the rest of the world.

According to Prah (1995:66) the use of ALs was in most instances first taught and studied by missionaries. Their original aim was to render religious literature especially the Bible, into indigenous languages to serve their evangelical work. However, the educational efforts of the missionaries also created a cadre, which went into the service of colonial administration. Colonial powers worked closely with missionary activity in order to ensure the production of a "culturally, suitably formed and acculturated native serviceable to the workings of colonial administration and the extension of influence." Memmi, cited in Prah (1995:66), expresses regret that "if only the mother tongue was allowed some influence on current social life, or was used across the counters of government offices, or directed the postal service; but this is not the case. The entire bureaucracy, the entire court system, all industry hears and uses the colonisers' language. Likewise, highway markings, railroad station signs, street signs and receipts make the colonised feel like a foreigner in her own country."

\* A lack of teaching materials in ALs is the third argument for retaining European languages. This argument has given justification for the use of English in Ghana and Uganda, of Portuguese in Mozambique and of French in Zaire, now The Democratic Republic of Congo. This claim however does not justify the use of European languages as MOI from grade one. Mateene (1979:15) argues that because we are still learning the

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foreign languages in which our books are written, we are not yet in a position to write our own books in these languages. "And so long as we are still reading these foreign books, so many as they are, so good and beautiful, we shall have no need of writing our own." He goes on to state that publishing books is business in many countries, but in Africa it depends squarely on Europe and this is because of the European languages used.

Given the small number of readers, there is also a valid argument that an African book industry is uneconomical. Mateene (1979:15) writes that even daily newspapers of the African capitals do not exceed 50 000 copies in cities of more than a million inhabitants, as due to "the languages used by the editors who are forced to sell little so long as they publish in languages known by the minority elite. It will take centuries before the majority of the population in an African country learns how to read and consume a literature written exclusively in English or French."

The fact that ALs are not international can be identified as the fourth reason for the retention of European languages. There is a need to establish relationships with other countries but it should not be at the expense of the national languages. Mateene (1979:29) writes that "we should distinguish between knowing an international language as a second language and making an international language the internal official working language of the whole population at the expense of the native language/s of the whole population." What appears to be the case in most African countries is that English, instead of being adopted as a second language, has replaced the indigenous languages in a number of fields, including lower primary education. Mateene (1979:29) continues by pointing out that even if English is the most widely used international language it must be noted that it is learnt by the majority of its speakers all over the world as a second language. This then means that the majority of people who speak an international language know at least two languages of which the native or national language is the first.

All these arguments bear a fair degree of validity. However, the powerful argument remains that using the mother tongue as medium of instruction has irreplaceable psychosocial and cognitive benefits for the learner. Evidence from research seems to

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conclusively suggest that maintaining children's mother tongues does not impede or retard acquisition of a second language, and that is in fact a strong foundation on which second language acquisition takes place.

### **2.3 Arguments for Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction at Junior Primary school**

Linguists and educational psychologists agree that the use of the mother tongue as the language of instruction in the early years of education has proved advantageous, especially where the development of cognitive faculties and psycho-social integration with regard to culture is concerned. Conversely, it has been demonstrated that classroom use of a language, which is not the language already spoken by the child, results in cognitive and pedagogical difficulties. The Threshold Project Report (1990) for instance reports that in South African schools, language factors in the curriculum are complicated by the curriculum overload that occurs at the beginning of standard three, where not only do pupils have to contend with a change of medium of instruction, but also curriculum expansion into content subjects, all with their own disciplines, concepts and vocabularies. Pupils have to deal with a shift in approach from learning English as a subject to using English as a medium of learning across the curriculum, often without the necessary skills required to read a content subject textbook with understanding.

Furthermore according to Awoniyi (1982:1) the mother tongue of a child is closely associated with that child's growth and development. As the child matures, his or her language develops, and, through language, personality and experience are expressed.

It is also argued that language is closely related to culture. The mother tongue is a part of culture: it conveys and/or transmits culture, and it in turn is subject to culturally conditioned attitudes and beliefs. Awoniyi (1982:1) states that "as man is the cause, transmitter, and recipient of culture, so her mother tongue reflects her culture, personality, and the cultural group to which she belongs." A person's mother tongue is a compendium

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of what society regards as important, and this language provides the means by which she can study and understand the values and concerns of society.

When exploring the relationship between language and culture, the implications of the Whorfian Hypothesis are highly relevant. This hypothesis is concerned with the possibility that people's views of the world may be conditioned largely by their native languages. According to this theory, a person's mother tongue provides her with a series of categories, which form a framework for her perception of the world. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:17) state that there are a number of ways in which the effect of cultural patterns on language becomes clear. They cite the physical environment and values as factors that may affect their language. The Whorfian Hypothesis, as cited in Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:5) emphasizes this point when it asserts that peoples mother tongue molds their thinking and their way of comprehending the world.

Appel and Muysken (1987:61) list the following arguments in favour of using the mother tongue as medium of instruction in the early years:

- The first language of the child must be used as the initial medium of instruction to ensure that academic progress is not hindered, while the majority language can be learned as a subject.
- The minority child's general cognitive development will be retarded if he or she does not receive education in the mother tongue, and if the mother tongue is not further developed in the school. In relation to this point Cummins (1978) has developed the threshold hypothesis which states that minority children must attain a certain level of competence (referred to as the threshold level) in their first language before starting to operate extensively in the second language for her not to suffer from cognitive retardation. According to this hypothesis when the child's first language has low prestige, language development slows down while crucial cognitive patterns remain undeveloped.

Inspired mainly by the positive results of research on bilingual and immersion education and the views of Toukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas (1977), James Cummins (1978)

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developed interesting and important ideas on the linguistic and cognitive consequences of bilingualism which opposed the balance hypothesis of Macnamara (1977). This hypothesis states that bilingualism has a detrimental effect on linguistic skills, and claims that human beings have a certain potential, or perhaps neural or other physiological capacity, for language learning. In other words, greater proficiency in one language implies fewer skills in the other languages. Cummins' Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis on the other hand, states that children can attain high levels of competence in their second language if their first language development, especially the usage of certain functions of language relevant to schooling and the development of vocabulary and concepts, is strongly promoted by their environment outside the school. The high level of proficiency in the first language makes possible a similar level in the second language. On the other hand, when skills in the first language are not well developed, and education in the early years is exclusively in the second language, further development of the first language will be stunted. In turn, this will exert a limiting effect on second language acquisition. According to the hypothesis, development of the minority child's first language is a prerequisite for successful second language acquisition.

In fostering first language development of minority children Cummins (1978) stresses that most attention should be given to academically related aspects of language proficiency. In this instance Cummins' views are in line with those of Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976), who introduced a distinction between two forms of language proficiency: surface fluency and conceptual-linguistic knowledge. According to them immigrant children can often communicate effectively in everyday situations (surface fluency), but they lack the conceptual-linguistic knowledge necessary for the development of academic language skills, particularly those related to literacy. This is also in keeping with the earlier findings of Bernstein (1976:30), who theorised out that different speech systems or codes create for their speakers different orders or relevance and relation. According to Bernstein (1976:30) "as the child learns his speech, learns specific codes which regulate his verbal acts, he learns the requirements of his social structure. The experience of the child is transformed by the learning generated by his own

apparently voluntary acts of speech. The social structure becomes the child's psychological reality through the shaping of his acts of speech."

Cummins (1980) used the terms Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which roughly encompass Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa's two categories. BICS are the phonological, syntactic and lexical skills necessary to function in everyday interpersonal contexts, while CALP is required in tasks where students have to manipulate or reflect upon surface features of language outside immediate interpersonal contexts, as in school tasks or language tests.

In line with Bernstein and others Appel and Muysken (1987:61) argue that minority language teaching is a requirement for a healthy development of the child's personality and the development of a positive self-image. If schools do not provide any minority language teaching, then the school becomes for minority children "a place where neither their language nor culture exists, possibly where they are not even accepted, a place where their identity is questioned and undermined." (Toukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas 1977:20). It is also stated that the self-image of minority children will be harmed if literacy in the minority language is not developed in the school.

To substantiate the claims by linguists and psychologists about the necessity for mother tongue education in the early years of schooling, some research has been done. The next section will briefly review some research done in Africa, United States and the United Kingdom.

### ***2.3.1 Research Findings in Africa with regard to MOI in Lower Primary***

Among the most conclusive studies carried out in Africa to prove the benefits of mother tongue as MOI in lower primary school is Nigeria's national policy on mother tongue literacy and the experimental project carried out in 1970 in the Ife region (Akinnsaso,

1993). The project's purpose was to test the use of mother tongues in education during the first six years of primary school. Despite initial doubts, the evaluation of the pilot schools and comparisons between them and other Nigerian schools were very positive. The students in the Ife project scored higher than their counterparts in the regular schools both academically and cognitively. According to this study, the advantages of teaching children in their mother tongues go beyond academic success to include cultural, emotional, cognitive and socio-psychological benefits.

In Tanzania, research on secondary education demonstrated the superiority of teaching in Swahili rather than English for the development of cognitive functions. It was noted, for instance, that when students were asked a question in English, the answer was often incoherent and irrelevant, showing a lack of understanding of the question and/or ability to reply in English. When the same question was asked in Swahili, students responded in an articulated way. (Mluma and Materu, 1978).

In South Africa, a bilingual transitional programme known as The Threshold Project was launched and evaluated in 1990 (Van Rooyen, 1990). In this bilingual programme, English replaced the students' mother tongue in the third year of primary school. The principal conclusion of this study was that bilingual programmes in which a language other than the students' mother tongue is used before a certain age or certain 'cognitive level' is achieved are not likely to be successful.

In Mali, a similar evaluation of possible cognitive benefits for students learning through the medium of the mother tongue was carried out in 1985 (Bamgbose, 1991). The study followed 154 students from experimental schools and 340 students from French-speaking schools over six years starting at the same level (first grade). Forty-eight percent of the children in experimental schools finished their studies without repeating a single year, as compared to only 7% of the students in Francophone schools. Although other factors may have contributed to the success of the pilot schools, the study proves that the use of mother tongues in education is an important factor in academic success.

### *2.3.2 Experiments in Great Britain and the United States*

The issue of which language to teach in is not specific to Africa. Useful lessons can be learned from the experiences of other countries, even though the context differs. Both Great Britain and the United States have experienced a large influx of immigrants from all over the world. With immigration comes the issue of how best to achieve cultural and linguistic integration of the various ethnic groups into the social fabric. Initially, both Britain and the United States chose total English immersion as a means of facilitating the integration of immigrant children. However, by the 1980's, the flaws in the immersion theory became evident and the academic performance of immigrant children became a real concern. From 1978 to 1981, the University of Bradford in Great Britain observed the effects of a yearly bilingual program on five-year old children who were native speakers of Punjabi (an Indian language). A control group using only English scored much lower than children who were taught partly in English and partly in Punjabi. Again these studies did not take into account other possible spin-offs with regard to the emotional and cultural growth of those children.

In the United States, the Centre for Minority Education and Research of the University of California carried out one of the most comprehensive longitudinal studies of bilingual education programmes to date (1981-1991). The object of the study was to determine whether teaching Spanish-speaking students (who have limited English proficiency) mostly in English or teaching them in English in combination with Spanish, better enables them to "catch up" with their native English-speaking peers in basic skills (English, language, arts and mathematics). Students in 51 schools across five states were sampled. The study covered three types of programmes: English immersion (almost all teaching is in English), Early-Exit Bilingual (less than forty minutes of instruction in the mother tongue per day, for no more than two to three years), and Late-Exit Bilingual (instruction in the home language represents 40 to 50% of the daily schedule up to grade four). The study came to the following conclusions:

- The students' mother tongue is the most effective language of instruction.

- Rapid transition to classes taught only in the students' second language does not allow for satisfactory development of the students' linguistic and cognitive abilities.
- The second language can be taught effectively if half of the students' classes are taught in that language.
- A bilingual/multilingual program, integrated into the regular curriculum, gives the best results.

It is difficult to determine the exact degree of importance of early mother tongue teaching for academic success. There are other important variables, such as the quality of teachers and educational material, the curriculum, and the teaching methods used. However, research conducted worldwide confirms that from a pedagogical standpoint it is better, all other things being equal, to teach children in their mother tongue. Although, this 'principle' is increasingly gaining the recognition of policy-makers, prohibiting factors (linguistic diversity, technical problems and costs), the development of quality materials and the problem of implementation remain.

In the next section I intend to filter the arguments for mother tongue instruction through my own experiences as a siSwati speaker. I will also link these arguments with the need to raise the status of ALs as school subjects and a vital learning area.

## **2.4 Arguments for siSwati as Medium of Instruction at Lower Primary school and as a Subject in siSwati Speech Communities**

### **2.4.1 Past Policies**

According to Campbell (1997:10) South Africa provides one of the clearest examples of a country where ALs were developed by the colonisers to serve a particular function, as media of Bantu Education. These languages, which existed before Afrikaans, were never developed to the level that Afrikaans was in the early decades of this century. At the turn

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of the century Afrikaans was said to offer no scope for intellectual training, for it had no literature and a very basic vocabulary. By the time the Afrikaners came to power in 1948 Afrikaans had progressed to the extent that it could replace English as the medium of instruction in institutes of higher education, e.g. Universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Bloemfontein etc. Even though Language Boards were created in South Africa to develop ALs, the apartheid government sought to limit ALs to use within the family, cultural group, the Bantustan and the school. Since Africans were not involved in the development of their languages, the strategies to develop these languages were perceived by African leaders as “an attempt to keep Africans in tribal bondage” (Benjamin 1994:101 cited in Roy-Campbell 1997:11). Roy-Campbell (1997:11) continues to point out that the low level of development of most ALs during the colonial era suggested that these languages were not capable of serving as vehicles for advanced knowledge. “Many Africans carried with them into the newly politically independent states this conception of ALs and it has provided the ideological underpinning for educational language policies in post-colonial states” (ibid.11)

The use of language as a defining characteristic for an exclusivist concept of nationhood has been an ideological cornerstone for the policy of apartheid. In the school system this involved the strengthening and perpetuation of ethnic division. As Alexander (1990:133) states:

... the indigenous languages were to be systematically developed in order to imprison their speakers in their ethnic cultures and thus, coincidentally, to curb the rapid growth of African and, more generally, black nationalism.

The question of language is crucial to the debates around the transformation of education for all South Africans. In the drama of the liberation struggle, resistance to language policies in education has had a starring role. This resistance culminated in the student uprising of 1976, when the issue of enforced language medium became the central symbol of the oppression of Bantu Education. While the education crisis has deepened on all fronts in the years since then, the pervasiveness of the language issue is clearly

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illustrated by the ways in which language impacts on student performance, work opportunities and educational mobility.

While much research implies that mother tongue instruction is vital for cognitive development in the early stages of learning, pedagogical sensitivity becomes suspect in the context of the advantages of mother tongue instruction for apartheid policies. The mother tongue policy has been seen by most African people as an integral part of the general oppression of Bantu Education. As a paper given at the ANC's 1990 language consultation puts it:

... mother-tongue was perceived by the oppressed people of South Africa as yet another ploy on the part of government to limit opportunities for Blacks in an age of rapidly increasing technology. The ultimate objective of mother tongue instruction was not the enhancement of cultural heritage as the government stated it to be, but rather, to further divide and rule people (1990:19).

As a result of its connotations in the past it is rather difficult to convince parents to accept the cognitive and psycho-social benefits of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in South African schools.

Elsewhere in Africa the British, French and the Portuguese colonizers followed active extinction programs of the ALs. For instance in French colonies individuals were expected to reject their culture and language and be assimilated into the French culture completely. The colonisers went to the point of sending students to France in order to assimilate the African elite into French culture. (Prah 1998)

#### ***2.4.2 A New Language Policy***

The Department of Education's Language in Education policy, as outlined in the Curriculum Framework for General Education and Training of July 1996 (page 24) acknowledges that '... language is central to learning and that it is through language that ideas are clarified and communicated ...' and that '... policies in language education

could affect learners' opportunities for cognitive development as well as their sense of identity and relative worth.'

It also outlines the aims of the national language-in-education policy as follows:

- The promotion of equitable access to education and thus to society and the economy.
- The establishment of additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education.
- The promotion and development of all the official languages.
- The support of the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purposes, languages which are important for international trade and communication, and sign language.
- The countering of disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home language and language of learning and teaching.

At the present moment the Language in Education policy can be said to be a 'grand policy', as the Government has not taken any major steps in promoting multilingualism in the country.

As a siSwati speaker, I feel there is a need to develop siSwati as a medium of instruction and as a subject in the siSwati speaking communities, in such a way that it provides enrichment of the cognitive processes in early childhood. I believe in a powerful psycho-social development through the first language and that the full development of the second language, in this case English, can only take place if it is launched from a rich mother tongue platform. I must clearly state that I am not arguing for the development of ALs for use in scientific and technological contexts or for siSwati to become the medium of instruction beyond the first few years of primary education. My argument is that English must continue to occupy its present position in the public sphere and siSwati be used in the private spheres of these speech communities.

I also believe that the siSwati speech community lacks the amount and diversity of abstract thought that typifies advanced societies, based on literary, expansive discourse

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through books. SiSwati speakers have a long way to go towards a truly liberal society where they are able to come to an understanding of their deepest emotions and develop an enjoyment of everything that is beautiful, realize their own deepest qualities and potential and have the right to all knowledge. At this stage there is no scope for individuals to scrutinize, criticize and correct what is wrong in society as the language of critical thought is largely absent from their discourse.

There is a clear need to develop an intellectualised discourse at school level. This implies that siSwati, like most ALs, suffers from linguistic stagnation due to neglect to most of its domains. It manifests a vocabulary deficiency when it comes to certain fields of knowledge pertaining to (post)modern society. Rorty (1995:100) maintains that all human beings carry about a set of words which they employ to justify their actions, beliefs, and their lives. These are the words in which individuals formulate praise of their friends and contempt for their enemies, their long-term projects, their deepest self-doubts and their highest hopes. For me (post)modernising siSwati is about a process that will equip learners with the kind of vocabulary to talk about their lives in this way. Rorty (1995:100) calls such vocabulary the "*words that tell the story of our lives.*" [my emphasis]. It is indeed possible that siSwati learners become what Rorty (1990:101) refers to as "ironists", people who continuously experience radical shifts, who continuously doubt their final vocabulary because they are continuously adding new vocabulary to their repertoire. They should be able to continuously "redescribe" and redefine their lives.

Dlamini (1996) in her paper on language policy in Swaziland states that the lack of a protective language policy in that country has put siSwati in a low-status position. In principle, although English is used as a medium of instruction from senior primary level, siSwati is to be used as a medium of instruction in the junior primary grades, but this does not happen in practice. This is clearly detrimental to the siSwati language. As a subject it has an equally low status, given the fact that it is not a compulsory passing subject, unlike English. The fact that a sound base in the mother tongue is a prerequisite for psycho-social and academic growth seems to be completely ignored.

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It is my belief that siSwati and English occupy different domains in the society. These two languages serve different, almost predictable purposes. Appel and Muysken (1987:23) write that “the domain takes social organization as its conceptual basis.” According to them when speakers use two languages, they will not use both in all circumstances. This general perception has been explored in a number of articles by Fishman, who has been studying Puerto Ricans in New York, work that has resulted in such famous research reports as ‘Bilingualism in the Barrio’ (Fishman et al., 1968 a). The point of departure for Fishman (1965) was the question: who speaks what language to whom and when? He goes on to list three factors that are involved in language choice, namely group membership, situation and topic. Applying Fishman’s observation to siSwati we can conclude that siSwati is mostly used at home, when talking to children, when children talk amongst themselves, during family gatherings, when talking about intimate personal matters, religious matters etc. So we can say that siSwati dominates the home or private domain. English on the other hand, is used in the public sphere: for instance in official correspondence with lawyers, filling up forms, correspondences with local authorities, discussing the state of the economy, the rate of unemployment etc.

Ferguson (1959) further discusses the issue of languages used in different domains. His notion of diglossia takes the characteristics of the languages involved as its point of departure. According to him it is not only necessary to look at bilingual speech behaviour from the point of view of the situation, it is also important to focus on the specific languages involved. In his definition, diglossia involves two varieties of a linguistic system, termed H (high) or formal, and a vernacular or popular form, termed L (low). Each variety has its own functions in the speech community. We can therefore say that for siSwati speakers the H variety is English and the L variety is siSwati. My belief is that each language should be stretched to the fullest so that it is fully capable of functioning in its domain. For example siSwati must be well developed in such a way that it is possible for speakers to use it to express any concept or idea in the private domain. Once children are able to fully utilize siSwati then it can function as a good base for the learning of the second language, English. If learners fail to express cognitively demanding concepts and their deepest emotions in siSwati then it may be difficult to express them in an unfamiliar

language. Speakers must have labels for their thoughts, feelings and abstract issues in their mother tongue to be able to trigger them when they speak in English unlike the semilingual condition that is evolving at present.

## **2.5 Arguments for siSwati As a High Status Subject throughout Schooling**

Since siSwati language speaking learners have been severely disadvantaged educationally, socially and economically by politically inspired discriminatory language in education policies in the past, it is of critical importance that the teaching and learning of siSwati as a subject receives urgent attention. Like English, siSwati now needs to be recognized as a valuable resource. According to the Eltic Reporter (1996:11) existing AL syllabi are compartmentalized, structural and grammar-based. They are also described as having a limited focus on the development of the basic interpersonal communication competencies. ALs, including siSwati in such syllabi, in my opinion continue to be undervalued and under-exploited in the learning situation. The Eltic Reporter (1996:11) states that “the situation that currently prevails in language teaching in disadvantaged schools is that a number of English Additional Language courses are in fact ‘compensating’ for inadequate African Language, Primary Language syllabi and courses by ‘carrying the burden’ of developing critical, linguistic, cognitive and conceptual skills which should, in fact, be developed in and through the AL”.

In a comparison of the existing **DoE’s Primary Language African syllabi** and the **DoE’S 1995 Interim English Second Language Syllabus for the Higher Primary Phase**, the Eltic Reporter (1996:11) highlights important differences. For instance the English syllabus requires the learners to “understand how a book is organized in order to use the contents and index pages to find particular information, and to be able to write coherent paragraphs using the information they have found. The African syllabi, with their grammar-based approach, do not require the development of any skills of this kind.” This kind of mismatch places an unnecessarily heavy burden on the Additional language curriculum as well as course writers, teachers and particularly the learners. English is the

additional or second language; this to me suggests that it should add on to what the learner already has, not start from the beginning. SiSwati needs to be used beyond the areas of learning about language, in general communication to areas such as the following:

- For literacy purposes (including poetry, literature, writing compositions etc.);
- Language for learning across the curriculum (including topics, themes and vocabulary from other subjects, and expository reading and writing etc.);
- Independent and cooperative learning skills development (including problem-solving activities, small group work etc.);
- Cognitive development (including thinking skills such as comparing and contrasting, analyzing, synthesizing etc.);
- Developing conceptual understanding and establishing the meanings of core concepts from other subjects;
- (Post)modern thinking

In other words siSwati, like English can be used as the main vehicle for developing siSwati speakers' linguistic, cognitive and conceptual skills for wider learning. siSwati should not be thought of only as "convenient resources" for learning English, but as a 'primary vehicle' for meaningful learning for siSwati speakers. In this way, the role of Afrikaans or English becomes 'complementary' in preparing learners to cope with the demands of learning across the curriculum through the chosen LOLT<sup>4</sup> rather than 'central' as is the case with English for English LOLT education at the moment.'(ibid.p12). The learning of siSwati as a subject can lighten the load of learning English, which becomes the MOI from higher primary. The Eltic Reporter (1996:21) suggests the following examples of the sorts of cognitive academic language skills which new learning programmes in ALs may need to incorporate:

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<sup>4</sup> Language of learning and teaching.

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- How textbooks and other resource texts are organized, and how to access particular information in them (using the contents and index pages, chapters, sections, headings, sub-headings etc.);
  - How expository texts are written/structured (predictive headings, topic sentences, main ideas, logical progression of ideas, coherence and cohesion, concluding statements etc.);
  - How to read for particular meanings (skimming and scanning);
  - How to interpret accompanying visual information such as maps, graphs etc. (visual literacy skills including: interpreting abstract representations, complex-three dimensional representations, symbolic representations, and other common illustrating conventions, etc.);
  - How to process particular information (analyze, compare, synthesize, summarize etc.);
  - How to plan and prepare drafts for oral or written presentations (mind mapping, flow charts, rough draft, re-draft and final draft etc.);
  - How to present information in language/discourse, which is, appropriate within particular disciplines/areas of learning, and for particular audiences; and so on.

If the siSwati syllabus aims to develop the cognitive and linguistic skills of learners then there is an urgent need to reduce the content of the curriculum and instead develop a base of necessary content-subject concepts with the appropriate discourses in siSwati. Learning should be more learner-centred with structured teacher-input and whole class activities. This will afford learners the opportunity to interact in guided group activities which focus on the exploration of new language, concepts or skills, through a combination of listening, reading, practical problem-solving, critical thinking and discovery activities, discussion and writing, using language they already control. In these ways, teachers can also develop a better understanding of the difficulties learners are encountering, and help them to gain clearer understandings than is possible through a predominantly transmission teaching mode.

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## 2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the low status of ALs and their underdeveloped nature has been explored as the major cause for the high failure rate in Africa. At the beginning of the chapter I have indicated the potential of ALs by looking at some of the works that have been written on the status and value of these languages before colonisation. There have been numerous arguments for the retention of European languages at the expense of ALs most of them relate to the incursion of Europeans. But most research seems to point to the fact that access to a second language, which is mostly a European language in Africa, is enhanced by a rich platform in the mother tongue. One of the arguments for retaining European languages has been that ALs are not developed enough to function in all domains. In this chapter I have come to the conclusion that the first step towards improving the status of ALs is to develop them. As long as ALs are underdeveloped, a semilingual state will prevail. In the next chapter I will be looking at the possibility of developing ALs in the school context.

## **The Development of African Languages at School Level**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In 1998 South Africa saw the resignation in protest of the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) chairman, Dr. Neville Alexander, thereby highlighting the deep contradictions between stated intentions and actual outcomes with regard to the development of ALs. Alexander had this to say about his resignation: "The fundamental issues are that the PANSALB is not being treated as an independent body, and there is clear evidence of a lack of political will to make multilingualism work". (Cape Argus, Monday April 20, 1998). This lack of political goodwill to develop ALs has been with us for more than a century. In order to understand and appreciate the present state of neglect of the ALs, one has to see it against the backdrop of The Bantu Education language policy, which shaped the development (or lack thereof) of the Southern ALs. In this chapter therefore I intend to revisit the Bantu Language Policy, which resulted in the non-development of ALs. I will also discuss the aims of the new Language in Education policy and Curriculum 2005, which I believe intend to raise the status of ALs. I will argue in this chapter that Curriculum 2005 will demand AL developers to borrow from English concepts on an unprecedented scale, as it is a (post)modern curriculum and as ALs have been operating within the confines of the traditional curriculum.

### **3.2 Historical Background of Bantu Language Policy**

Apartheid language policy gave rise to a hierarchy of unequal and impoverished languages which reflected the structures of racial and class inequality that characterised South African society. When the Bennet Education Act was passed in 1953, all teaching in ex-DET schools from Grade 1 to the end of Grade 4 was supposed to take place in the

children's home language. From Grade 5 to Grade 12, English became the 'medium of instruction' and the learner's home language was formally phased out, although it was still taught as a subject through to Matric. English and Afrikaans were taught as subjects from junior primary to senior secondary. In many schools where teachers felt that learners were not sufficiently proficient to understand the content lessons in English, they taught content subjects in the home language of the learners through to Grade 12. In many cases teachers themselves were not equipped to teach through the medium of English. Such language policies severely disadvantaged generations of learners, resulting in the widespread practice of rote learning and the memorisation of textbooks as a way of coping. As a result many Africans became 'linguistic cripples' within the learning context.

Troup (1976:35) states that the decision to use the mother tongue throughout primary school, announced in 1955 in preparation for 1959, was opposed by many Africans. 'An All-in-One' conference in 1956 expressed the opinion that 'mother tongue instruction would have the effect of reducing the horizons of Africans, cramping them intellectually within the narrow bounds of tribal society, and diminishing the opportunity of inter-communication between the African groups themselves and also with the wider world of which they form a part'. That was the main intention of Bantu education. The then minister of Native Affairs, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd is quoted as saying: 'My department's policy is that education should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society. There Bantu Education must be able to give itself complete expression and there it will be called upon to perform its real service. The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community ... until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze'. (Troup 1976:4)

It is clear from the Bantu Education policy that Bantu education was designed to keep the African in tribal bondage. In his own words Verwoerd stated that he would reform education so that natives will be taught from childhood to 'realise that equality with

Europeans was not for them and that the education of the white child prepared him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society.' (Troup 1976:4). In this sense English and Afrikaans, which were the only official languages of South Africa became 'forbidden pastures' for AL speakers. The irony was that they lived in a technological age and needed a language that could cope with scientific concepts, a mastery of one official language to enter employment and to gain access to world literature, but this was not any of the ALs.

In schools where the children spoke English or Afrikaans as their first languages, teaching happened in those languages throughout their schooling. There were also the parallel and dual medium schools. In these schools children learned in their home language, but were exposed to their additional language in an environment that encouraged them to use it in a meaningful way. As ALs were taught as third languages in a few of the schools, with books devoid of life skills and higher cognitive activities and the low status afforded these languages, there was no real incentive for AL speakers to explore and come to love their own languages.

On the whole, the methodology used to teach language did not encourage the learners to use their additional language as a means of communication. It was something to be learned at school and left at school. This was further compounded by the segregationist education system in which no mother tongue speakers of ALs were allowed to teach or learn at 'coloured', 'white' or 'Indian' schools. As a result many learners, whether in ex-DET, ex-CED, or ex-HOA schools, were not proficient in their second or third languages. Furthermore ALs were not allowed to develop as a linguistic tool for analytical and rational thinking. The Verwoerdian strategy to control African societies used their very languages to keep them in a pre-modern paradigm.

From the past policies one can conclude that language in South Africa has been a powerful tool of exclusion. Matric exemptions and many job opportunities were dependent on the learners' abilities to communicate in English and Afrikaans. Information about important national issues was communicated in English or Afrikaans. One can cite many instances where a person who was not fluent in one or both of these

languages was excluded from contributing to civil society. (Bloch, C., Pluddeman, P. and De Klerk, G. 1996). The dominance of English and later Afrikaans was sustained systematically in order to reinforce other structures of domination. These practices engendered as a corollary the low status of the indigenous languages and linguistic varieties of the African people. The speakers of these languages did not attach any value to their languages, instead there was a tendency to attempt to 'migrate' to English, but even that attempt was seldom successful as the foundation in their own languages was more than often shaky. Hence the attempted 'mastery' of English often brought about a semi-linguistic state which failed to serve the speaker in an elaborated fashion.

### **3.3 The New Policy: A lack of political will**

Current policy is geared to change this, but as Alexander said, there is lack of will on the part of government to promote the indigenous ALs, despite the fact that deeply embedded in the new Constitution are principles of non-discrimination, equity and redress. These principles govern policy in all spheres of public life in South Africa. As regards language, the national Department of Education states in the Curriculum 2005 document '... the government, and thus the Department of Education, has to promote multilingualism, the development of the eleven official languages and respect for all languages used in the country.' (Department of Education, 1997)

The Language in Education policy has amongst its aims, that of promoting all the official languages, particularly ALs. Unlike at any other time in the history of South Africa, there is a legislated move to raise the status of the use of the ALs in many domains. There is however, a contradiction in this regard, between theory and practice. The current Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG 1996) report for instance, states that in recent years it has become clear that there is a definite tendency to unilingualism in the country. It has been argued that, although multilingualism is indeed a sociolinguistic reality in South Africa, it is invisible in the public service, in most public discourse and in the major mass media. The government has failed to secure a significant position for

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language matters within the National Development Plan. This clearly indicates the contradiction between stated policy and implemented policy. As a result the Language Task Group feels that despite the fact that the country's Constitution provides for the principle of multilingualism, there is still an urgent need for the Department of Arts, Culture and Technology to devise a coherent National Language Plan which not only addresses the 'lip service' paid to multilingualism, but also utilises the country's multilingual resources. This is the very board that Dr. Neville Alexander has resigned from in protest. Even though a language plan has been formulated, he argues that the Government is still not committed to promoting multilingualism.

Language promotion can happen on many fronts, for example through the media, using the language in national and provincial government, promoting the visibility of prominent citizens/politicians using language other than English etc. (LANGTAG Report 1996:55). Amongst all the other avenues known for language development, I think education is the main mechanism used to develop language that will benefit the users at both the cognitive and affective levels at grassroots level. Since the Government, through both the Constitution and Curriculum 2005 has legislated the move to develop ALs, then the opportunity is ripe to develop these languages in a meaningful way.

As a language practitioner, I am interested in what is happening in schools with regard to the development of children through the mother tongue. The obvious starting point for this investigation would be Curriculum 2005.

### 3.4 Curriculum 2005 and (Post)modernising African Languages

For one to fully understand the concept of (post) modernising ALs, my perception is that one has to come to grips with what (post)modernity entails.<sup>1</sup>

The government has taken a bold step by making the change towards a communicative approach to teaching and learning through the introduction of Curriculum 2005. The low status of ALs and the lack of a coherent plan to develop these at a technical and cognitive level, have created a condition in which these languages have become so impoverished that speakers are inclined not to see them as vehicles for intellectual pursuit. Curriculum 2005 is set to change this, at least in theory.

The previous curriculum was designed for a more traditional society; to impart a fairly specific body of knowledge, when knowledge seemed stable and bounded. Ferguson

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<sup>1</sup> Giddens (1991:1) advocates that modern institutions differ from all preceding forms of social order in respect of dynamism, the degree to which they undercut traditional habits and customs, and their global impact. In this era, self-identity becomes a reflexively organised endeavour and each person is considered to have a unique character and special potentialities. This was clearly not the case in traditional societies where lineage, gender and social status and other attributes that had a bearing to one's status were all relatively fixed. Transitions had to be made through the various stages of life, which were governed by institutionalised processes and the individual's role in them was relatively passive. In other words, the individual did not exist in traditional cultures, and individual achievements did not have much value. In modern times however, the individual or self is seen as a 'reflexive project', for which the individual is responsible. People are not just what they are, but what they make of themselves.

Relativism which includes moral, epistemological and ontological aspects, the prime quality of modernity will have a profound impact on African traditionalism. In this period there is a rejection of universal and transcendental foundations of knowledge and thought, and a heightened awareness of the significance of language, discourse and socio-cultural locatedness in the making of any knowledge claim. Basically post modernity describes a world where people have to make their way without fixed referents and traditional anchoring points. It is a world of rapid change, of bewildering instability, where knowledge is constantly changing and meaning 'floats' without its traditional fixing. People are skeptical, uncertain and question issues that were considered the truth. Words and information become open to multiple interpretations, mirroring multi-perspectival knowledge. Meanings that felt comfortable are no longer so. It is with this idea in mind that I am advocating the development of African languages and their speakers.

(1982:312) describes the traditional curriculum as one which required learners to master the content of certain books and courses, where schools went from teaching simple piety and fundamental literacy to eventual instruction in the arts and social sciences. Such schools were carrying out the mandate of the society, or at least giving it their best effort. They are said to have taught for obedience or productivity or whatever trait that seemed appropriate at the time.

Curriculum 2005 aims to adjust learners to a fluid and ever-changing society, where learners are to be considered unique and autonomous. Such a humanistic curriculum is 'the process of exposing people to the mystery in themselves-and then getting out of the way so you don't get run over' (Ferguson 1982:312). This curriculum offers a new approach to learning. Unlike the traditional method where learners were considered empty vessels and the teacher was all knowing, in this new curriculum, learners are considered intelligent. It will not always be the teacher who gives learners all the information, makes them copy notes and where all learners will be expected to produce one correct answer, instead learners will be given the opportunity to express their views, think critically, question certain things, argue, reflect and generally be skeptical about knowledge. This is contrary to the aims of the traditional curriculum which emphasised being 'right' at the expense of being open. Ferguson (1982:306) states that such a curriculum taught the young how to be quiet, look backward, look to the authority, and construct certainties.

Curriculum 2005 is a child-centred, integrated approach and if one looks at the foundation phase for instance, there are three learning areas, *numeracy*, *literacy* and *life skills*. In the area of *numeracy*, the learner is expected to use her own experience and sense of number and space to develop confidence and enjoyment as she develops her own approach to working with these concepts. Efficiency, fluency, correct use of terminology and symbols, all lead to the ability to communicate mathematically. In the area of *literacy*, there is an inclusion of all the modes of communication including visual literacy, media literacy and computer literacy. Learners need to be aware of cultural values that

influence understanding of text and the ability to recognise hidden intentions. There is also a need for fluency in listening, understanding, speaking, reading and writing.

In the area of *life skills* the aim is to empower learners to develop their physical, affective, social, cognitive and normative potential, to become creative, empowered citizens able to participate within the environment. (Tiley 1997:16)

AL textbooks that will support the ideals set out in this progressive curriculum are simply non-existent as the Apartheid system discouraged the kind of mind able to write Curriculum 2005 AL textbooks. Materials that will be developed in ALs will need to encompass all eight learning areas. Furthermore they will have to include all the phase and programme organisers. AL textbooks must incorporate society, communication, environment, personal development etc. In one text a learner should be able to achieve a number of specific outcomes. For instance in a siSwati language text, not only language, literacy and communication must be included, other specific outcomes like mathematical literacy, technology, arts and culture, human and social sciences, life orientation and economic and management services must be taken on board.

Curriculum 2005 aims to push AL learners to think about paradoxes, conflicting philosophies, and the implications of their own beliefs and actions. They will be taught that in life there are always alternatives and that knowledge is relative. Using their languages, they should be able to “innovate, invent, question, ponder, argue, dream, agonise, plan, fail, succeed, rethink and imagine. They will learn to learn.” (Ferguson 1982:347)

In the traditional method of learning, each learner is expected to work individually. If the learner struggles with the subject matter, only the teacher has the answer. There is a need for materials that will engage learners in group work. Not only will learning be fun, but also it will make allowance for learners to interact. The role of the teacher will be redefined, as she stops being an all-knowing transmitter of knowledge to become a facilitator of activities. As learners share their ideas in their different groups, they will

learn to synthesise, analyse and they will be exposed to a range of perceptions from their group members. Working in groups not only encourages all the children to participate, but it shows the reality of the world, where people operate in groups rather than as individuals.

The traditional AL curriculum is inclined to make AL speakers to devalue their languages, as they feel they do not function in cognitive areas pertaining to abstract thought. African children need books that will engage them in higher order thinking. If I were to cite an example of the core textbook in siSwati called *Luhlelo LwesiSwati* (Dlamini 1976), one notices that it is designed for passive learners. It is very rigid and non-negotiable in the sense that there is only one answer to a question. It is clearly oppressive because all questions that learners have are silenced by a spuriously unitary answer. The rigid exercises at the end of the book force learners to learn by rote. They are taught to morphologically analyse siSwati words and teach the phonological structure of siSwati. This model seems to assume that learners are unable to pronounce the sounds of their mother tongue! The top-down mode is prevalent in the study of literature.

Curriculum 2005 is based on mainstream, global culture, acknowledging the inextricable thrust of modernity. It is to be expected that this curriculum will have a profound influence on the world-view of siSwati and other ALs if they are truly exposed to this thrust. To talk global culture within the intimate confines of a pre-modern language, like siSwati, is to open the door to a hurricane of new words and ideas. And as the linguistic tools do not yet exist in siSwati, Curriculum 2005 will force AL authors to borrow from English items on an unprecedented scale. In the next section I will explore the possibility of modernising ALs through linguistic borrowing.

### 3.5 Linguistic Borrowing as a strategy for the modernisation of AL

Ferguson (1968:32) advocates that the modernisation of a language may be thought of as the process of its becoming the equal of other developed languages as a medium of communication; it is in a sense the process of joining the world community of increasingly intertranslatable languages as appropriate vehicles of modern forms of discourse. ALs need to be developed in order for them to be able to capture the rapid expansion of new knowledge, the application of new knowledge to the production of goods and services, an enhanced specialization of labour, differentiation of institutions and increased orientation toward impersonal and utilitarian values, particularly maximization of efficiency. (Gormani 1980 cited in Cooper 1996:149). Cooper (1996) further points out that the orientation of modern societies towards knowledge, technology, production, efficiency, and the specialisation of labour and institutions stimulates linguistic elaboration.

Language modernisation can also be regarded as language elaboration. It is more than developing vocabulary to talk about technology, it is the ability to read the world through one's language, and it is generally a way of thinking in new abstract ways about the world. Rorty's (1995:101) concept of the ironical lifestyle as a constant redescription of life comes to mind in this respect. Ironic individuals according to Rorty have radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary they use, because they have been impressed by other vocabularies and they realise that arguments phrased in their present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve their doubts. If ALs are fully modernized, then speakers should be able to realise that anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed, and they will learn never to quite take themselves seriously as they will be aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change, they will always be aware of the contingency and fragile nature of their vocabularies, and of themselves.

It can be argued that the fluidity demanded of a (post)modern vocabulary does not yet exist in siSwati. The concept of forever shifting vocabularies that Rorty (1995) speaks of,

requires exponential growth in siSwati concept formation through a process of incorporation of English items.

The modernisation of languages, according to Appel and Muysken (1987:54) has always occurred and will always occur, because people adapt their language to their communicative needs. Once a language is modernised it will be in a position to function beyond its traditional domains, i.e. the home, family and the immediate community.

Jernudd (1977a) cited in Cooper (1996:151) states that the creators of terms face a conflict of goals. On the one hand, they want terms to be readily understood within the target speech community. I think borrowed words are the suitable ones in this circumstance as they are widely used and therefore readily understood. On the other hand, communicators want to facilitate communication beyond the borders of their country. I agree with Jernudd (1977a) that planners face a conflict and I would strongly suggest that because it can become useless to coin new words which nobody is going to use, perhaps it is better to make official the borrowed words that people are inclined to use anyway.

Fishman (1983: 117) argues that successful corpus planning 'is a delicate balancing act' between the old and the new, traditionalism and rationality. It requires sensitivity to what the target population will 'like, learn and use' (ibid. 115). He continues to advocate that efforts can be made, of course, to lead the target populations to like certain models of goodness; indeed, Fishman writes that the public must be told 'why what is being offered to it is desirable, admirable, and exemplary. (1983:112) He continues by warning that corpus planners run the risk of defending models of good language which gradually lose public favour as the balance changes between old and new, theirs and ours, modern and traditional. When this happens, younger persons tend to view the planner's products with indifference, at best and with ridicule at worst. The LANGTAG report (1996) also recommends that in developing the vocabulary needed for the expansion of functions possible in the new language dispensation, there should be an allowance for the use of loan-words, a recognition and promotion of the words already in use among speakers of the language, rather than artificially created items.

Modernisation of ALs should also not be thought of as a process of recirculation of older linguistic items because the language may in fact go into decline, linguistic purism could lead to language paucity. For ALs to be developed, we need to accept the borrowed words in use instead of trying to force speakers to adopt new words that have been coined. Vibrant languages worldwide show a tendency towards hybridisation.

### 3.6 Conclusion

As a language practitioner, interested in the development of languages at school level I have highlighted that through Curriculum 2005, the Government has taken the initiative to develop ALs, at least in principle. I have also looked at the traditional curriculum and the old policy. I have come to the conclusion that Curriculum 2005, together with the new Language in Education policy pose a challenge for ALs which were sidelined in the past. In theory both documents aim to raise the status of ALs, but that is only in theory. AL speakers need to redefine and redescribe their lives using their mother tongues. For that to happen, I have suggested that there has to be an allowance for extensive importation of words from English. It has also surfaced in this chapter that modernising AL creates a tension between tradition and modernity. I then concluded by stating that instead of coining new words in ALs, there is a need to accept the borrowed words which are in circulation.

For one to fully understand what the aspect of (post)modernising ALs in the school context entails, my sense is that it is wise to first come to grips with what a curriculum is. In the next chapter I will discuss issues around curriculum development. As mentioned earlier past policies were designed for specific purposes and perhaps it is right for one to have a clear idea of what curriculum development entails.

## **4 Curriculum Development**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Practitioners are inclined to think about curriculum as simply a programme of content, thus erroneously equating the concepts curriculum and syllabus. This leads to a simplistic notion of education as an endeavor only concerned with the development of the child and the transmission of unconscious knowledge. In this chapter, I argue that schools transmit a very particular kind of knowledge, which is closely related to the structure and power relations in society. The knowledge that is imparted also has a direct relationship to the economy, social stratification, power relations, culture, values and that which is considered by certain people in society to deserve to form part of curriculum. As a point of departure, I will discuss the curriculum that was in place in South African schools, particularly schools for black children. I believe this will substantiate the argument that there is more to curriculum than transmission of knowledge and developing the child. I further argue that the mother tongue must play a crucial role in curriculum development to empower its speakers psycho-socially and cognitively.

### **4.2 The 'Politics' of Education in South Africa and the Impact on Curriculum Development**

Meerkotter and van den Berg (1994:8) define the schooling system in the apartheid years as divisive and unequal, which contributed to a situation in which black 'citizens' were denied their rights to make vital decisions about economic, political and social activities. The situation as they state was officially supported by the fact that nobody was allowed the right to question the 'eie sake' agenda of the state and the practice of excluding black people from meaningful decision-making processes in their own country. 'Through unequal education schooling opportunities for the different classifications of human beings, a strong effort has been made to enforce a specific type of social order.' The approach to education has also been

described by the two authors as 'positivist' and one which "led not only to the political, social and economic disadvantagement of the majority of South Africa's people, but also the dehumanization of all the people in the sense of taking away certain essential rights such as the freedom to decide about their own social, economic and political future and to take responsibility for their actions. A system which deprived the people of taking part in those types of activities which would allow them to develop into full human beings ... " AL speakers were also deprived of the right to partake in social, political and economic decisions affecting their future through the non-usage of their mother tongues.

To a person who has no knowledge about curriculum design the question she wants to ask is: what did the politics of the country have to do with schooling? In a nutshell Meerkotter and van den Berg (1994: 1) succinctly respond to the question as follows: 'Teaching does not take place in a vacuum, but in very specific settings, one of the most prevalent being the school. Schools are important political institutions in that they exist within the parameters laid down and allowed by the formal political authorities.'

Schooling in South Africa, during the apartheid era, has operated in the way mentioned above, to serve the privilege and power of the dominant social classes. As the society became more authoritarian, so has the attempt of the state to control what goes on in the school grown to a point of near paranoia. In such a situation, where the state strives to perpetuate the status quo, control over the school curriculum will obviously be a key factor. Accepting Michael Apple's definition of curriculum as "educative environments in which students are to dwell" (1979:111), It can be argued that one should expect the school curriculum to be designed to operate in support of the dominant order in a society and to function to reproduce the social, economic and political order, or to operate in support of the extension of inequality.

Apple has seen curriculum design as 'inherently a political and moral process which involves competing ideological, political and intensively personal conceptions of valuable educational activity.' (1979:111). Given the role of schools in the maintenance of the dominant political, social and economic order, the realities of power will normally have as their consequence the emergence of a school curriculum which presents views with which the dominant power grouping feels comfortable, and exclusion of views which it is opposed. This situation

becomes ever more stark given the extent to which the society is authoritarian or not. (Meerkotter and van den Berg 1994:3)

The authors further advocate that one way in which the political dimension of curriculum design and control is concealed by those who rule, is “to describe it as a technical activity to be engaged in by educational experts” (ibid. 3). Apple (1979:111 cited in Meerkotter and van den Berg 1994:3) states that: “Our commonsense thought in education tends to move in a direction of decision-making in which spheres of decision-making are perceived as technical problems that only necessitate instrumental strategies and information produced by technical experts, hence both effectively removing the decisions from the realm of political and ethical debate and covering the relationships between the status of technical knowledge and economic and cultural reproduction.”

In this way the political dimensions of curriculum design and the way in which the state uses its power to put in place a curriculum that supports its views is hidden by a process that Dreyfus (1982:196) calls ‘political technology’. He argues that: “political technologies advance by taking what is essentially a political problem, removing it from the realm of political discourse, and recasting it in the neutral language of science. Once this is accomplished the problems have become technical ones for specialists. In fact, the language of reform is, from the outset, an essential component of these political technologies. When there is resistance or failure this is construed as further proof of the need to reinforce the power of the experts.” I am inclined to agree with the authors. My experience of learning my mother tongue has also been technicist and scientific in its orientation. The curriculum was indeed presented to AL speakers as one that only needed to be unpacked in a technical manner. The siSwati lessons for instance were a series of a scientific dissection of the different parts of speech, the characters in the literature books etc. There was no room for the development of the cognitive, affective and psycho-social faculties through the mother tongue.

So the power political dimensions of curriculum development are cloaked in a ‘neutral’ language of technical expertise positivist approach that has come to be known as technicism, which Stanley (1978:223 cited in Meerkotter and van den Berg (1994:4) defines as ‘a state of mind that rests on an act of conceptual misuse of scientific and technological modes of

described by the two authors as 'positivist' and one which "led not only to the political, social and economic disadvantage of the majority of South Africa's people, but also the dehumanization of all the people in the sense of taking away certain essential rights such as the freedom to decide about their own social, economic and political future and to take responsibility for their actions. A system which deprived the people of taking part in those types of activities which would allow them to develop into full human beings ... " AL speakers were also deprived of the right to partake in social, political and economic decisions affecting their future through the non-usage of their mother tongues.

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education for liberation. These are the sort of questions we need to ask ourselves in the process of developing ALs.

\* The implications of treating education as something that is 'neutral' reduces not only the possibilities of engaging in critical and reflective thinking, but narrows education down to little more than a socialisation process perpetuating the status quo without question, and treating knowledge as truths which are to be discovered, rather than as something which is humanly constructed. This is precisely what education in ALs seemed to do. Since learners were given syllabi in notes form and were expected to know it thoroughly, they automatically thought what was given to them was the truth, and therefore indisputable and unquestionable. Learners were therefore not at liberty to think critically and reflectively. Even the type of questions that learners were asked did not develop their cognitive and affective faculties. Learners were instead expected to follow instructions without even asking why.

In South Africa, the curriculum particularly in African schools and colleges was placed by procedures which gave the right of decision-making to representatives of the dominant groups within society. The content that was to be learnt and taught, the way it was required to be taught and learnt, the resources available, the textbooks and the examination requirements to exercise control over the process, were in the hands of the dominant group. When one looks at the question of values then, in such a situation, one is forced to think that the values which were transmitted by schools, were those of the dominant class. Giroux (1981:28) cited in van den Berg (1994:32) states that the school institutionalises, in various aspects of the curriculum, modes of knowing, speaking, style, manners, and learning that most closely reflect the culture of the dominant classes. Van den Berg states that "when we teach a particular version of reality and call it educational, all we are doing is simply concealing the essentially political nature of what we are doing. Promoting one view of reality and opposing another has enormous political consequences, not only in terms of the regards of the schooling system".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Those who best learn that ideology, who best behave in the required way, are the ones who succeed at school and go on to obtain positions of power and privilege in the society.

It is generally accepted that a great deal of what was done under the name of education did a serious disservice to the growth and development of African children. The duty of the teacher was to transmit correct answers about certain topics, instructing students to do activities in a prescribed fashion and involved “teachers in enforcing submissive and uncritical behaviour on students”. (van den Berg 1994:34). All in all African schools in South Africa can be said to be responsible “for producing a citizenry fundamentally unequipped and under-equipped to play a full and critical role in the society into which they have been born. The politics of inequality and oppression has its structural dimensions-laws, practices, customs, traditions, but it is aided and abetted by an educational establishment and practice that tends to confirm and consolidate people’s inequality and oppression”. (Ibid. p35)

In the next section I will endeavor to discuss other standpoints which have been put forward that can form the base for curriculum development. These include issues such as culture, knowledge and the truth. I will start by discussing the relationship between curriculum and knowledge.

### 4.3 Different Standpoints on Curriculum Development

Van den Berg (1994:31) and Elliot Eisner (1985:87) both caution that curriculum-in-action is often layered with hidden agendas. Eisner argues that schools teach much more-and much less-than they intend to teach and that schools actually teach three curricular-the *explicit*, the *implicit*, and the *null* curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

In line with this exposition Van den Berg asserts that the political effects of these (types of curricula) are obvious. “Schools teach both knowledge and ignorance, and teach people to

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<sup>2</sup> The *explicit* curriculum is said to comprise those aspects which are visible and public, stated in syllabus documents and prospectuses. The implicit or ‘hidden’ curriculum comprises those aspects of the socialisation of students into values that are dominant in schooling, things like compliant behaviour, competitiveness, efficiency, the importance of athletics rather than school work in the first term, and so on. And the null curriculum comprises those things that schools do not teach, ‘the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills that are not part of their intellectual repertoire’ (1985:107)

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accept certain things rather than others as normal and natural. The skills, knowledge and competence of the public at large is significantly influenced by what they experience at school. The political effect is that people are equipped in different ways and with different attitudes and knowledge, and in such a way that the interests of the dominant minority and of the dominant economic class are enhanced and protected.”

For one to understand the debates around curriculum planning, one has to come to grips with issues that are involved and to appreciate the different viewpoints, the different epistemological and educational stances which can be taken. If for instance initiation of pupils into the cultural heritage of society or into what is best within it (Lawton 1973, 75) is regarded as a major purpose of education, we have to ask many questions about what “cultural heritage means, the basis on which we might select that which is best within it, grounds for attributing intrinsic value to certain activities, what is meant by a form of understanding or rationality and many other related questions”. Kelly (1989:28). The other stance which we might want to take is the one which asserts that education should be concerned to develop the knowledge pupils bring into school or their needs and interests, then “we must explore the epistemological assumptions underlying these claims and issues which they raise.” (Ibid.p27)

The view that education is a mere transmission of knowledge also needs to be explored. Even the view that education is concerned with the knowledge that learners must acquire, needs to be unpacked. There is clearly a need to know what criteria is used to select the knowledge that will form part of the curriculum. The question of knowledge could also lead us to ask questions around values, as there will certainly be some set of values by which choices will be made in curriculum. Kelly (1989:28) advocates that issues of values are central to educational planning so that the issue of the status of assertions of value must also be examined if we are to achieve a basis for any kind of educational decisions, whether its focus be content, purposes or principles. In the next section therefore, the issue of what knowledge must be included in the curriculum will be dealt with.

### **4.3.1 Curriculum and Knowledge**

Taylor (1993:1) states that the task of reconstructing the school curriculum, both locally and internationally, is a particularly difficult one during the present period of extreme flux and contradiction that signals the close of the twentieth century. "On the one hand (post)modernity presses the particular upon us, insisting that we consider carefully the specificity of South Africa in thinking about inventing a new knowledge tradition to lead us into the future." Bernstein (1971:47) relates knowledge as depending on "how a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principle of social control". (Cited in Taylor 1993)

From the viewpoints above, it is evident that the knowledge that is included in the curriculum is linked to, among other things, power, social stratification, the economy, (post)modernity and globalisation. This is emphasised by Taylor when he says that "the very form and content of the curriculum involves wrestling with contradictory imperatives which cannot be separated from the economic and political struggles of specific sets of social actors".

Young and Spours (1988) propose a unified system that would both address the problem of social stratification, and take account of the rapidly changing curricular demands imposed by fundamental changes occurring in the world economy. They propose that reformed academic subjects, oriented to the study and transformation of work be at the heart of the curriculum and then the development of existing school subjects would have to involve new forms of specialisation, which themselves reflect new economic, technological and social developments. (Cited in Taylor 1993:4)

According to Taylor the incorporation of particular knowledge in the curriculum provides a point of identification and belonging for local communities; "it promotes a sense of self-worth and provides a secure foundation from which to build successful school experiences for communities previously alienated by dominant culture." (P 5)

The intimate relationship between knowledge and power has through the ages lead to much disagreement over the question of what is to be included in the curriculum. This questions has been the focal point of educational debate and it remains to be a highly controversial issue, as

it is also rather difficult to identify those areas of knowledge that have value in their own right. Two main strands of theory have emerged during the development of Western European philosophy: those whose starting point stresses that true knowledge is achieved by the mind in some way independently of the information provided by the senses; and those who maintain that knowledge of the world about individuals can be derived only from the evidence that the world offers through the use of senses. According to Kelly (1989:30) such strands see knowledge as essentially independent of the observations of our senses. They reflect knowledge as “God-given and out there”.<sup>3</sup>

Philosophers like Plato had a completely different view of knowledge. According to this view, there is a clear hierarchy of knowledge with philosophy at its peak. The fundamental assumptions of this hierarchy is that the greater the level of abstraction, the more status a particular kind of knowledge has. Plato also asserts that gradations must be recognised within the realms of intellectual knowledge according to degrees of abstraction, with philosophy, or dialectic, as a form of knowledge that he considers totally abstract and not hypothetical in any way. (Cited in Kelly 1988:32)<sup>4</sup>

The other view of knowledge is empiricist. Its fundamental tenet is expressed in the claim of John Locke, and it advocates that no knowledge comes into the mind except through the gates of the senses. The mind of the newborn child is seen as a *tabula rasa*, a clean sheet, void of all characters, without any ideas.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The criticism that Kelly (1989:31) makes against such theories is that ‘they give rise to a view of certain kinds of knowledge as timeless, objective, owing nothing to the particular circumstances of individual era,

<sup>4</sup> The criticism which has been leveled against this view of knowledge is that it leads to an inevitable stratification of society because ‘all those citizens who have not revealed the talent necessary to be educated as philosophers will be brought up to accept the superior knowledge and judgment of the philosophers kings ... this is a view which leads to the generation of two or three levels of culture, two or three kinds of curriculum and two or three classes of people within society...It is a view which makes the attainment of educational equality impossible.’

<sup>5</sup> According to Kelly (1989) a basic position such as this leads to a less confident view of knowledge and to a greater awareness of the tentative nature of human knowledge, since it is agreed by everyone that the rationalists are right in claiming that the evidence of our senses is unreliable. In John Dewey’s pragmatic view, one is required to be hesitant about asserting the value of any body of knowledge or its right to inclusion in the curriculum. Knowledge is viewed as hypothetical and therefore subject to constant change, modification and evolution, and it requires one to accept that knowledge is to be equated with experience, which means, for

Those who view knowledge as not having even a current universal acceptance have also disputed another influential position, John Dewey's view, who argues that knowledge is a product of both human and particular social groups. (Blum 1971 cited in Kelly 1989:34).

"On this view, knowledge is socially construed ... any attempt to make decisions about the content of the curriculum that are based on some views of what kinds of knowledge are valuable, has to be seen as an attempt to impose one particular ideology on children and thus to achieve some kind of social control over them ..."

Lawton (1973:22) differentiates between a 'Classical' and a 'Romantic' view of knowledge. The Classical view is said to stress knowledge in terms of disciplines and ultimately school subjects, and sees the curriculum as the induction of young members of society into the established forms of thought and understanding. The Romantic view on the other hand, sees education as an integral part of life rather than preparation for the adult world, and stresses experience, awareness, and creativity, and sometimes - but not always-the 'unity of knowledge'.

Muller and Taylor (1993:312) state that curricular knowledge circulates not only within the school, but also between the school system and other domains of society. They argue that "The three specialised domains that deal centrally with the curriculum are the academic domain, the bureaucratic domain and the school itself" There is a fourth, the formal political domain ... the State". In the school domain, where there is interaction, there is much transmission of the 'hidden curriculum', which as Giroux (1988a: 23) envisages, includes "the unstated norms, values, and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning." The teacher who has the authority to speak, adheres to the 'blueprints' of curriculum implementation which include the certification procedures, all internal examinations and the exit examination, a device 'that predisposes the teacher to speak in *loco administratus* rather than in the name of the community, his or her conscience or perception of the truth, civic usefulness or any other principle.' Muller and Taylor (1993:323)

The school domain is described as undemocratic because it excludes from participation all the major interest groups in society, be they teachers, civil rights groups or education interest

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children to acquire knowledge is that they should have experiences to base their hypotheses. That will help them gain control over the environment. The idea is not to impose what is knowledge for adults upon them; instead they must be assisted to develop their own knowledge and their own hypotheses, which might be different from that of adults.

groups. "Although individual teachers may be consulted during the drawing up of the syllabus ... in textbook writing ... their involvement occurs as individual experts, not as representatives of the organised teaching profession ... once the knowledge has been extracted from the text, the means of translating this into classroom practice is also supposed to be automatic." (1993:321)

Lawton (1973:44) argues for the importance of acquiring knowledge using one's own native language. He views language as a crucial factor in the acquisition of different kinds of knowledge and the perception of reality in different ways. "Language enables us to objectify a variety of experiences; language enables us to transcend the here-and-now and bridge different kinds of reality within everyday life, integrating them into a meaningful whole; language enables us to actualise experiences distant in time and space; language enables us to construct symbols which are highly abstracted from everyday experience".(1973:44). According to this view the curriculum concentrates more on academic views of reality and ignores the 'real world' of the majority of pupils. "The kind of difficulties which large numbers of pupils, including very intelligent ones experience in making the leap from everyday reality to academic knowledge is seen to stem from the use of non-native languages. The problem of developing a common curriculum transmitting a common culture is largely a question of developing pupils' language in a variety of contexts and in a variety of forms ... we must start with the language (and knowledge) that the pupils already possess, and develop from there." (1973:45)

To conclude this section, I would like to say that in my understanding of some of the major features of what philosophers and others have said about knowledge, it is evident that there is no clear, hard and fast theory of knowledge upon which any firm choice of curriculum content can be based. They also do not offer any clear-cut basis for the development of an objective framework of values within which decisions on curriculum planning can be made. What is clear is that curricular knowledge is closely related to the economy, power relations and social stratification and also that the mother tongue seems to unlock realms of knowledge better than a second language. In the South African situation, if we avail knowledge in the mother tongue, then it means we are empowering AL speakers. The saying is always 'Knowledge is Power.' In the next section I would like to consider the view of basing decisions about content of the curriculum on an analysis of the power relations in society.

### **4.3.2 Curriculum and power**

Bernstein (1971) and Young (1971) have explored the link between curriculum and power and this exploration provides a useful perspective for analysing the power relations of curriculum change in South Africa. These authors link the selection and ordering of curriculum knowledge, forms of pedagogy and assessment procedures to patterns of social power and control. They suggest that fundamental changes to curriculum entail changes in broader patterns of power and domination. Young points to the difficulties of changing the 'high status' parts of the school curriculum; subjects offered at higher levels to students labelled 'most able' are less amenable to change than the primary school curriculum or subjects offered to 'less able' students.

Deacon and Parker (1993:127) relate the subject of power and the curriculum to modernity. They say that modernity affects almost every aspect of social life, where one's chances of survival in this serious game depend upon recognising and responding to opportunities and calculating and reducing risks. Schooling is also involved in this serious game in the sense that the power relations that operate through curriculum, pedagogy and administration "are firmly locked into broader normative patterns of privilege and inequality. Curriculum cannot be understood distinct from power relations nor divorced from specific social contexts; indeed, power and context fundamentally inform the process of curriculum theorisation itself."

Using Maputaland region, on the North-Eastern seaboard of Zululand of KwaZulu, as a case study, the authors advocate that schooling promotes differentiated status, bargaining power and feelings of self-worth. Those who have gone to school are said to dominate in the whole spectrum of social relationships from access to better employment opportunities to dominance in church, social and community affairs. A majority of children are excluded from schooling, and the few that are included are subjected to an alien curriculum. "The rewards that schooling provides for individual achievers reproduce socio-economic inequalities and few opportunities are provided to learn about, or engage in a process of changing existing power relations." (Ibid. p. 129)

Foucault (1979:27-8) relates power to knowledge when he states that “power-knowledge relations are to be analysed not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations”. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge.

Foucault (1986:229) suggests that power cannot be established, consolidated or implemented “without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse.” In the South African context, ALs need to be empowered with the right kind of discourse for their speakers to engage in meaningful power relations.

Closely related to the subject of power and the curriculum is the issue of truth and in the next section I would like to discuss how the subject of truth is perceived in curriculum development.

### **4.3.3 Truth and the Curriculum**

Deacon and Parker (1993:137) point out that people are subjected to the production of truth power in that to authorise certain forms of knowledge as true or scientific is simultaneously to disqualify other knowledges and to restrict who can speak and about what. These authors then draw the conclusion that ‘truth is not outside or lacking in power.’ (P. 138)

Foucault (1984a: 72-3) advocates that “truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power.” This proposition is elaborated on by Deacon and Parker (1993:138) when they state that “it is not possible to distinguish between power-distorted knowledge (ideology) and power-undistorted knowledge (truth). Hence ‘our’ ‘knowledge’ of ‘reality’ and ‘ourselves’, and more specifically of ‘curriculum’ and ‘schooling’ are effects of power, which constitutes us as subjects and permeates our knowledge by constructing its objects. Even an attempt to free knowledge from power, to generate an emancipatory curriculum or to resurrect popular knowledge, is in itself a literal ‘forging’ both of such knowledge and of its supposed object - a progressive popular

can be based. They also do not offer any clear-cut basis for the development of an objective framework of values within which decisions on curriculum planning can be made. What is clear is that curricular knowledge is closely related to the economy, power relations and social stratification and also that the mother tongue seems to unlock realms of knowledge better than a second language. In the South African situation, if we avail knowledge in the mother tongue, then it means we are empowering AL speakers. The saying is always 'Knowledge is Power.' In the next section I would like to consider the view of basing decisions about content of the curriculum on an analysis of the power relations in society.

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Using Maputaland region, on the North-Eastern seaboard of Zululand of KwaZulu, as a case study, the authors advocate that schooling promotes differentiated status, bargaining power

The second problem that emanates from basing the curriculum on culture arises from the difficulty of establishing what is or should be the relationship between schools and the society in which they function Kelly (1989:37)<sup>7</sup>

For those who base their curriculum on culture, a further difficulty arises when attempting to state in specific terms what culture is. In these modern times it is clear that no one pattern of life can be called the culture of that society.<sup>8</sup> Kelly asserts that the problem is further aggravated by the fact that most societies are far from static entities and this implies that one feature of their culture is that it is changing, evolving and developing. Taba (1962:54) states that change in cultures is 'not only rapid but deliberate.' He further asserts that technological change also leads to changes in the norms, the values, the beliefs, and the customs of a society; in other words, it must lead to a 'fluid culture'.<sup>9</sup> This then suggests that schools need to go beyond teaching the culture of the society to equipping learners to take their place in such societies, but developing in them the ability to think for themselves and make their own choices. The role of the school in modernity should therefore go beyond merely transmitting

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<sup>7</sup> One would think that the aim of the school is to transmit the culture of the society. But there are those who will argue that schools exist to transform that culture, to act as positive agents of change. The questions that remain in our minds are; do schools change society or do they themselves change in response to prior changes in society. My sense is that both are interlinked and are subject to many of the same influences and constraints so that changes occur simultaneously.

<sup>8</sup> Kelly writes that most modern societies are pluralistic in nature, one can discern in them a number of different, and sometimes unrelated cultures or subcultures. It does not follow that such subcultures must be regarded as hierarchically related to one another, but it is necessary to recognise them as being different from one another. It is also important to appreciate that most individual members of a society will participate in more than one of these subcultures at different times or aspects of their lives. Consider the case of South Africa, where there exists different ethnic groups, each with its own traditions, habits, beliefs, customs and so on. There are also different religious groups, different social groups, each of which can have its own norms and its own 'culture'.

<sup>9</sup> A recognition of the rapidity of social change and of the need for people to be equipped to cope with it and even to exercise some degree of control over it suggests that schools should in any case go beyond the notion of initiation of pupils into the culture of the society, beyond socialisation and acculturation, to the idea of preparing pupils for the fact of social change itself, to adapt to and to initiate changes in the norms and values of the community. Kell (1989:39)

There are individuals who may feel that there is much that the school is transmitting which is beyond culture. My suggestion would be that there should be an introduction of subjects like Art, music and literature, which constitute a cultural heritage of humanity in general rather than of one particular nation.

culture, to producing individuals who will transform culture.<sup>10</sup> This is especially true of ALs that are in the thesis of modernisation.

In considering the possibility of a multicultural curriculum, such as in the United States of America, Giroux (1990) cited in Muller (1993:48) argues that the most common criticism of this conventional multiculturalism is that it presents the plurality of cultures as simply different from each other without showing the relations of power or domination between them. This critique asserts that the "culture on which the curriculum is based, Western, Anglo-European, academic, theory-centric and phallogentric - is a dominance one, while all the other cultures and sub-cultures of America are not only different but subordinate to the dominant culture, and thereby perpetually disadvantaged. This power disparity is generated in the unequal social relations in the wider society and is ineluctably if imperfectly reproduced in the curriculum". In the South African context, an attempt to promote the different cultures clashes with globalisation as envisaged by modernity.

Muller continues to advocate that multiculturalism is a noble ideal that cannot be realised because of the material and symbolic power differentials that keep the dominant culture dominant, in such a way that where multiculturalism is tried, there is much cultural disrespect. In the curriculum what is likely to occur is that 'a rather coy incorporation of examples from other cultures which are then displayed to proclaim a spurious cultural equality disarticulated from social justice, freedom and equality under these circumstances, very little social or psychological affirmation can occur, and neither should real differences in school performance be expected'. Muller (1993:48) In the place of promoting multiculturalism, the aim should rather be to promote one culture: global culture, for as Muller asserts, an attempt at promoting multiculturalism only leads to cultural disrespect.

In opposition to multiculturalism there is a view which aims to destroy 'false' centres of identity that were created for us all by dominant culture, and to construct in its place a mutual centre founded on common lack. The perspective taken by (Rorty 1991, West 1990, Ellsworth, 1990a) is that the problem of multiculturalism fetishes cultural difference as its essential identity. This viewpoint sees the solution as teaching the social construction of identity and difference in order to denaturalise and de-essentialise it. 'in this way difference is radicalised and identity is understood as contingent and strategic (Ellsworth 1990a cited in

Muller 1993:50). Muller elaborates on this approach by stating that its aim is 'to create a common platform, a common 'we' or identity on the basis of common experiences of oppression, exclusion and subordination. This new 'we' understands itself in a different relation to dominant groups which, it is hoped, brings about a renewed courage to go out and deal with it ... the approach recognises the point, and responds to it by acknowledging the need for a 'necessary stop' or closure to the process of identity undoing, for a 'necessary fictions' of identity that help us to be able to act even as we deconstruct the identity basis for past actions that has disempowered rather than empowered us before'. (P.50) In the South African context AL speakers need to be empowered in their mother tongue to be able to have a common platform, where they will be in a position to continuously redefine their identities. Since identity is closely linked to the mother tongue, it is only through an empowered mother tongue that people can recognise the need to redefine and redescribe their lives and identities.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed some of the foundations that curriculum could be based on. I have also highlighted some of the criticisms that have been leveled against various theories of curriculum development. In a bid to clarify the argument that curriculum development involves more than content, I have looked briefly at some of the theoretical basis of the traditional South African curriculum. In the next chapter I will discuss the challenge that Curriculum 2005 poses to South Africa, in particular, to ALs and their speakers, considering their present status. I have come to the conclusion that for AL speakers true knowledge, power and liberation can only occur in their own languages. They will only be able to fight domination, poverty, and unequal distribution of power if they learn in a mother tongue which is plugged into global culture. There is a need for AL speakers to learn, through their mother tongues to redefine and redescribe their lives constantly. If these languages could take the route of particularity rather than the one encapsulated in global vision, this may occur at their own peril.

## **5 The New Curriculum - A Bridge Too Far for African Languages?**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In 1994 South Africa became a democratic country. Since then the ANC government is engaged in a process of reform. In the education sector, the introduction of Curriculum 2005 points towards an effort to equalise educational opportunities for all sectors of society. In the social sector, the Government advocated multiculturalism and multilingualism. However, this transformation seems to have been superceded by globalisation. In this chapter I endeavor to discuss the plight of Africans and their languages in response to the transformation in society and in the education sector. The argument I would like to put forward is that Curriculum 2005 demands a paradigm shift for ALs and their speakers towards globalisation. There is a need to mainstream the teaching of ALs. I will look at the challenge that is brought about by modernisation and globalisation to ALs and their speakers. I will then conclude this chapter by suggesting how ALs and their speakers can cross the bridge from premodernity to (post)modernity.

### **5.2 The New Curriculum**

Kabali-Kagwa, Barnes and Miller (1998:1) acknowledge the miracle of the South African transition to democracy. Such a transition is one that involves many sectors such as the political, the social and the economic sectors. In their paper, these authors argue that education plays a fundamental role in the process of transformation, including social change. Indeed, in 1994 the ANC led government started a process of transformation in the social, cultural, economic, parliamentary, housing and education sectors. All these changes are an attempt to make over society. Politically and socially the new dispensation expressed an interest in cultural diversity and the nurturing of all cultures (multiculturalism). The aim was to preserve the differences that make individuals and groups special. People were to be made

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psychological affirmation can occur, and neither should real differences in school performance be expected'. Muller (1993:48) In the place of promoting multiculturalism, the aim should rather be to promote one culture: global culture, for as Muller asserts, an attempt at promoting multiculturalism only leads to cultural disrespect.

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direct opposite of expressing oneself freely and being a unique individual. Globalisation and modernity have made the world so small, in such a way that there is no tolerance for individuality if it does not conform to the original. People's individuality is being robbed by the global village.

Curriculum 2005 comes in the wake of modernity and globalisation and it aims to encourage children to transcend particular and local culture and be able to live comfortably in the rapidly shrinking global village. In the African context, my understanding is that there is no room for Africanisation and the African Renaissance, but instead a requirement to mainstream all cultures.

Muller (1996:1) states that "Democratisation and modernisation have, albeit always problematically, gone hand in hand, at least if we understand democratisation as the deepening of practices of autonomy and self-control." Beck (1994:174) cited in Muller (1996:1) also asserts that "the more societies are modernised, the more agents (subjects) acquire the ability to reflect on the social conditions of their existence and to change them in that way."

Bajah (1993:20) remarks that the issue of marrying the curriculum and culture is very thorny. He says that culture cannot be transmitted wholesale, some aspects of our cultural heritage must be reviewed and if they cannot stand the test of modernity, then they have to be shelved without any sentiments. He goes on to advocate that an attempt should be made while transmitting certain cultural aspects to provide sufficient reasons why it is advantageous to retain that aspect. "The survival of our culture must be argued from a strong educational utility and not just because certain things were done by our fore-fathers and therefore they must be done". Bajah touches the root of the problem. In the debate between those who advocate cultural preservation in language teaching, and those who see language learning and teaching as a modernisation process, he comes up with the acid test. The question that he poses to traditionalists is: why is it advantageous to retain, promote or preserve a particular aspect of culture?

Stagnant, archaic aspects of African culture, which have been the foundation of the old apartheid curriculum and built on traditional tribal premises, are being challenged by

Curriculum 2005. This notion is captured well by Deacon and Parker (1993:132). They describe the traditional model of education as one that is of the authoritarian pedagogue, where the teacher is unproblematically considered to be the fountain of knowledge and authority, and the role of the learner is to *submit* to certain prescribed norms. The knowledge that is imparted is certain and true because it is prescribed by higher authority. All the above result in direct, autocratic and often uncritical rote learning of restricted content. 'Teachers operate within a traditional model not only because of their training and peer pressure but also because it offers a sense of security and certainty and, by constituting pupils as unquestioning and passive subjects, prevents the exposure of teachers' inadequacies.' (132) This model suited African culture where the supreme, unquestioned authority of the parent was transferred to the classroom.

Curriculum 2005 however, represents the definite shift to a democratic approach and a skepticism towards certain ideals and religious dictates. Learners are taught to be skeptical about knowledge, as it is not static. For the teacher in ALs, who is used to teaching facts, where students participated in a scramble to be first with the right response and where learning was competitive, Curriculum 2005 poses a challenge. Even the authority of the teacher seems to be threatened by this new curriculum as learners may question and reject what teachers tell them. This is a serious challenge for teachers of ALs, whose traditional culture and community encourage them to exercise their powers even in the work place. African culture does not encourage children to question or even engage in a debate with adults. It teaches children to agree with what those in authority say and think is right.

Curriculum 2005 requires of the AL speaking teacher to allow learners to have the (post)modern spirit of skepticism and enquiry - the very qualities that are being squashed in traditional societies. The curriculum requires of Africans to think in a (post)modern way, whereby all knowledge is constantly relativised and questioned. Curriculum 2005 demands a drastic shift towards an understanding of global culture. There is an educational argument for the rejection of cultural traditions that stand in the way of children to take charge of their own lives.

Not all educationists are in agreement with the idea that education should not promote the culture of a given society. A (post)modern curriculum such as Curriculum 2005 is viewed by educationists such as Odora (1993) as one that preaches cultural obliteration of tribal

(premodern) values to be replaced by an effective programme of globalisation.<sup>5</sup> It can also be argued that the African continent has been recolonised by the all pervasive Western mindset that infuses all social, political, cultural and educational processes. Phillipson (1998) takes this line when he advocates that in the present world the imagined is being superceded by global and regional alliances. One wonders how the Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki's idea of an African renaissance fits within the thoroughly Western oriented Curriculum? Odora (1993:15) laments the fact that the education system in Africa has remained essentially Westernised. She maintains that the values of 'larger society' then become European/Western values which then means the system that is dealt with in Africa is "basically narrow, very limited, and similarly very limiting. It is therefore one that restricts content as well as quality and quantity of persons entering it while at its core, it supports patriarchy, elitism, westernisation and maintains an underlying disdain for the values of African traditions". The tension between Western and African cultures is captured well by Phillipson when he states that "at the heart of globalisation is the tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation." (1998:101)

Phillipson (1998) writes that globalisation has economic, technological, cultural and linguistic strands to it. In his paper 'Globalizing English' he points out that the spread of English in diverse contexts is coupled with the flow of products, ideas and discourses and there is a trend towards the creation of the impression of a global culture through 'global markets, so that products and information aim at creating 'global customers that want global services by global suppliers.' (Hamelink 1994 cited in Phillipson 1998:101). This he calls a process of 'macdonaldisation', where "the competitive advantage against local cultural providers, the obstruction of local initiative, all converge into a reduction of local cultural space." (Hamelink 1994).

The shift to the (post)modern, global curriculum means deep-seated changes particularly for AL speaking teachers. My perception is that these teachers are being asked to give what they do not have. The teacher is important in liberating his/her students from the fetters of the

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<sup>5</sup> Odora (1998:1) describes the culture that the new Curriculum aspires for as engaged in 'epistemic violence', where aspects of culture or discourse that are used lead to the destruction of some cultures. She continues to state that there may be nothing wrong with western cosmology, 'but there is something grievously wrong with one culture to so sanguinely usurp all the spaces for human diversity, and yet purr diabolically about being the rightful guardians of global development and of human rights... As compared to the Asian and European child, it is the African child who begins schooling from a position of a subjugated cultural and religious identity'.

traditional AL curriculum. Curriculum 2005 requires teachers who are critical, analytical and reflective in style, who will be able to translate into action and articulate the expectations of the new curriculum. I cannot see how teachers in ex-DET schools will promote Curriculum 2005 without a thorough grasp of its meaning and challenge. If teachers are to become agents for social change, as they should, it is imperative that they should be well-equipped for the task. I wonder how teachers, who have been taught to respect their culture will be able to make the transition to a curriculum that could be viewing their culture as premodern and harmful.

The education and training of AL speaking teachers in South Africa has not equipped them to embrace Curriculum 2005. They have also been through training that prepared them to acknowledge traditional social structures. Their culture of non-reflective thinking precluded them from developing a critical mindset and tongue that can critique old hierarchies. In embracing Curriculum 2005, one of the necessary tasks is the retraining of new groups of teachers and the retraining of old ones. Jansen (1997:2) advocates that the language innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory. “A teacher attempting to make sense of OBE will not only have to come to terms with more than 50 different concepts and labels but also keep track of the changes in meaning and priorities afforded to these different labels over time.” Young (1997:5) echoes this point when he states that the area of Language, Learning and Communication is in English only and it presents what he describes as “semantically and culturally, an English-specific reading of the concepts, processes and intended outcomes.” For one to teach and learn within Curriculum 2005, then, will mean that he is trapped in an ‘English-centric’ communication process that is subtractive rather than additive with regard to the primary language. He writes: “This dependence on the English-specific applied linguistics/language education rhetoric and terminology will prove an obstacle to translation into indigenous ALs and might well delay indefinitely the realisation of the desired multilingualism.”

Each and every analysis of Curriculum 2005 suggests a quantum leap for ALs. Le Roux (1995:6) describes Curriculum 2005 as one which needs ‘a radical paradigm shift’ (whose) ‘heart is from a ‘additive, content product model’ to a ‘competence based approach, competences presented in the form of outcomes’ (cited in Muller (1996:3). The HSRC (1995:21) cited in Muller, further describes the learning programmes as ‘learner-centred’ and

learner-paced, (where) the learner determines her own educational fate, maximising her occupational opportunities and becoming a fully participating citizen in all spheres of social, political and economic life. Curriculum 2005 also aims to empower learners to take control of their learning as they take control of their destiny on the other.

Muller further advocates that the “social project of egalitarianism and empowerment is linked, to the skill needs of the national economy, usually also seen in the light of the global economy and global competitiveness.” (Ibid. p4). ‘Global competitiveness’ is described as suggesting that economies require a well-qualified population, and workers with flexible, generic and constantly up-graded skills. Young cited in Muller (1996:4).

Muller concludes that Curriculum 2005 aims to bring together “a flexible, active and autonomous individual of reflective modernisation to an (education system) that will promote and produce flexibility, autonomy and choice.” Muller (1996:4)<sup>3</sup>. By depicting Curriculum 2005 as one that could enhance reflective modernisation, Muller evidently hinted at the (post)modern elements in it. He is right in saying Curriculum 2005 focuses on critical thinking, reflective thinking and a skeptical approach to problems, but he misses the technicist nature of the curriculum, its insistence on solving problems, thereby creating a notion of knowledge that is modern to the core. It pays us to return to the cautioning voice of Jardine. Jardine (1992:116-7) critiques a curriculum that is based on technical skills. He says that such technical-scientific discourse offers itself as a *remedy* to the difficulties of life. Such a remedy then tends to “recast the nature of life’s difficulties into precisely the sort of thing for which a

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<sup>3</sup> Jardine (1992:121) ‘criticises’ a curriculum that responds to the needs of the economy when he states that it turn [s] education more and more toward the development of ‘marketable skills’ and away from a ‘liberal’ education. From my understanding, a curriculum such as OBE, emphasises *doing*. Gadamer (1977) cited in Jardine (1992:121) asserts that such an education ‘has turned toward the comparative security of self-possession (involved in the accumulation and securing of specific technical skills intended to give one comparative control over one’s place in the world, ways of, ‘having command’, not only over the world, but one’s self-understanding...’ According to Jardine the rise in technical knowledge creates the impression that one does not really understand the world, himself/herself without technical vocabulary. His suggestions is that life should be returned to ‘its original difficulty’, so that there is ‘play left in life and people can spend time ‘dwelling in the ambiguous interplays of life.’ Jardine (1992:123) warns that the problem with technical discourse is that it pervades the possibility of raising questions about people’s lives and the lives of their children. ‘The language it offers is already foreclosed...the difficult nature of human life will be solved [and where] we will have the curriculum ‘right’ once and for all. [Where] we will have turned children inside-out and searched every nook and cranny. Nothing more will need to be said. Hermeneutics advocates for the essential generativity of human life and its ambiguous nature.

technical solution is appropriate” and they require a ‘technical fix.’ My sense is that learning must not be based only on what can be solved, it is not necessary to fix all life’s difficulties. Curriculum 2005 tends to be solutions-driven, and children are presented with problems that *should* be solved. My suggestion is that we should not work towards a curriculum that is finally ‘right’, but instead towards the ‘essential generativity of human life’. (p.119)

Curriculum 2005 also aims to make the giant leap from the traditional curriculum’s emphasis on left-brain thinking to whole brain thinking and in the next section I will discuss this aspect of the new curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

### 5.3 Curriculum 2005 and Whole-Brain Thinking

A careful analysis of Curriculum 2005 shows that it has taken the initiative to accommodate all areas of the brain. Instead of having subjects like mathematics, history, geography, accounting and science being considered major subjects, there are learning areas which elevate the status of subjects which were considered minor. For example, areas like arts and culture and life orientation, which I consider to represent right brain activities, were neglected by the traditional curriculum. The shift to whole brain thinking allows learners to reflect and engage critically with arts experiences and works, demonstrate an ability to access creative art

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<sup>4</sup> Zdenek (1983:26) writes that researchers established conclusively that each side of the brain has its own area of specialisation and processes information in its own way. ‘The *corpus callosum* enables both hemispheres to work together for almost every activity; although one hemisphere or the other will predominate for a specific task.’ ‘... In ninety-five percent of the population, it is the left hemisphere that remembers names, adds columns of numbers, computes time and works in a logical, linear fashion. The right hemisphere is the mysterious, artistic side of the brain where metaphors are understood and emotions are realised. It is where dreams and fantasies are born.’ (Ibid. 1983:26). The left hemisphere on the other hand, is the side of the brain that is involved in language skills. It controls speech and it is the side that enables us to read and write. It remembers facts, recalls names and dates, and controls our ability to spell words. It is also the logical, analytical side, which can evaluate factual material in a rational way. This hemisphere also understands only the most literal interpretation in words, and processes information sequentially. ‘The logical, analytical thinking required for the working of advanced mathematical problems is produced by the expertise of the left brain’. (1983:27).

Clearly the left hemisphere was emphasised by the traditional curriculum. There was emphasis on content rather than skills, and subjects were taught separately and each required different knowledge and different skills. Musker (1997:9) asserts that ‘at the end of the year teachers would have to prove, by testing their learners, that the content knowledge set out in the syllabus had been acquired or not...as learners progressed towards a qualification such as Senior Certificate, the various subjects which they were studying became more and more separate and disconnected from each other.’

The right brain on the other hand is described as the ‘intuitive hemisphere’ (1983:27), where knowledge is not achieved through words but through images. This hemisphere can process information simultaneously, see problems holistically, evaluate a problem at once. The right brain understands metaphors and imagery, is capable of fantasy, stories, dreams, is artistic and it is also this hemisphere that is more in touch with emotions (1983:29).

and cultural processes to develop self-esteem and even to use the creative processes of art culture to develop and apply social and interactive skills. Even in the area of language, literacy and communication the emphasis has shifted away from parts of speech, reading eloquently and writing neatly, to the learners' abilities to show critical awareness of language use, accessing, processing and using information from a variety of sources and situations and responding to the *aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values* in texts. (My emphasis)

The area of *mathematical literacy* which is normally dominated by left brain people requires right brain individuals in the new curriculum to critically analyse how mathematical relationships are used in social, political and economic relations, and learners can now describe and represent experiences with shape, space, time and motion using all available senses. This is a shift from the traditional curriculum where learners who were not good at figures found themselves stranded in the left-brain.

Curriculum 2005 has also made *science* accommodate right brain individuals. Instead of people only understanding concepts and principles in sciences, the area of natural sciences requires of learners to demonstrate knowledge and an understanding of the relationship between science and culture, demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues, bias and inequalities related to the natural sciences and use scientific knowledge and skills to support responsible decision making. The holistic, organic approach to fields of knowledge is yet again evident.

In the area of *life orientation*, learners are taught to understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings, respect the right of others to hold personal beliefs and values and demonstrate the values and attitudes necessary for a healthy and balanced lifestyle. The area of *human and social sciences* encourages learners to demonstrate an understanding of interrelationships between society and the natural environment, and address social and environmental issues in order to promote development and social justice.

It is in the area of *economic and management sciences* that learners are expected to prepare for the world of work. In this area learners can engage in entrepreneur activities where they can demonstrate managerial expertise and administrative proficiency.

Even though Zdenek is of the opinion that the world we live in is dominated by left brain individuals who go about doing things in a rational, logical way, are good at verbalising ideas

and are great at figures, where ‘the schoolgirl who remembers names, adds numbers properly, and works with a great sense of order and tidiness is praised and gets a star beside her name’ yet ‘the right-brain dominant child who daydreams and stares at distant clouds, preferring to make up stories rather than learn her lesson, is sent home with a disciplinary note,’ (1983:27) my sense is that Curriculum 2005 represents a laudible shift towards whole-brain thinking and my belief is aptly stated by Zdenek (1987:27) when she states that ‘even though these creative gifts may be underdeveloped, that does not mean they cannot be revived.’ It is crucial in designing a new curriculum to be aware of the different functions of the brain hemispheres. It is true that the traditional curriculum which feeds into the world of work encouraged the domination of left-brain individuals, while the intuition of right brain individuals is perceived as not accurate enough as the world we live in is considered rational, logical and needs excellent verbal skills. Curriculum 2005 seems to go a long way to address the imbalance. The question that remains unanswered, however, is: how do we respond to Curriculum 2005 when it comes to addressing the issue of ALs?

#### 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted the challenges posed by Curriculum 2005 on ALs. The biggest challenge lies in the fact that ALs teaching has been interwoven with teaching culture. Initially the ANC led Government advocated multiculturalism, but the reality of the matter is that Curriculum 2005 adheres to the demands of modernisation and globalisation. Teachers in AL, who are still captured in the outdated, patriarchal method of teaching are suddenly finding themselves in the midst of the progressive, (post)modern curriculum they are not prepared for. Whilst the apartheid, traditional curriculum suited the supreme, unquestioned authority of the teacher, Curriculum 2005 wants learners to have the (post)modern spirit of skepticism and acknowledge the fact that knowledge is not fixed. A challenge is also being posed to the traditionalists to justify why certain aspects of culture need to be preserved. My conclusion is that AL speakers need to discard all those aspects of culture which may be harmful, painful as it may be.

The question that remains however, is how then do ALs teachers face the challenges posed to them by Curriculum 2005? My sense is that teachers and learners need to be carefully guided through the teaching and learning process. The most powerful means of helping teachers cross the bridge from the old to the new curriculum is to provide them with materials that

underscore and support this transitory phase. In the next chapter I will look at the possibility of using the textbook to confront challenges which represent nothing less than a quantum leap from a traditional to a (post)modern reading of society.

## **6 Crossing The Bridge—(Post)modernising AL Textbooks**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter it has been argued that Curriculum 2005 is a formidable challenge for AL speakers, teachers and learners. The traditional curriculum operated within the narrow confines of a knowledge-based philosophy of language education. Curriculum 2005 however, advocates the mainstreaming of all cultures and languages. AL speaking teachers, who are still captured in the premodern paradigm find themselves at a loss in the new Curriculum. In this chapter I wish to explore the possibility of using the textbook as a bridge from the old to the new curriculum. My argument is that new textbooks have to be written in ALs. Traditional textbooks have to make way for (post)modern textbooks that will transform the way Africans view their languages. There is also a need for textbooks that will engage African children in higher order thinking, books that will teach skeptical students the relativity of everything. As a point of departure I will explore the argument that good textbooks can transform teachers practices and learners' views of the world. I will then go on to discuss the implications and challenges of mainstreaming ALs, which includes the need for AL textbooks that will teach visual, cognitive, affective and cultural literacy. My last section will be a look at the challenges of writing progressive AL textbooks. I will argue that the lack of expertise in writing AL textbooks as per Curriculum 2005 requirements, necessitates a transitory step of writing from English. As blueprinting may be regarded as a political and ideological act, it requires a thorough critique of the implications of this mode of writing.

### **6.2 The Importance of the Textbook**

In exploring the role of the textbook I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the research done in this area by Mary Reynolds (1997) as it represents a succinct analysis of the issue. Her hypothesis was that 'textbooks do, potentially, at least, have a key role in education.' As I endeavor to argue that a new generation of textbooks can assist in transforming teaching practices in ALs, her research around the centrality of textbooks proved to be most significant. As a point of departure I will review some works which stress the role played by the textbook in learning. Reynolds (1997:29) writes that American and British writers on the subject have often consistently referred to the centrality of the textbook.

In the area of *life orientation*, learners are taught to understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings, respect the right of others to hold personal beliefs and values and demonstrate the values and attitudes necessary for a healthy and balanced lifestyle. The area of *human and social sciences* encourages learners to demonstrate an understanding of interrelationships between society and the natural environment, and address social and environmental issues in order to promote development and social justice.

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Even though Zdenek is of the opinion that the world we live in is dominated by left brain individuals who go about doing things in a rational, logical way, are good at verbalising ideas and are great at figures, where ‘the schoolgirl who remembers names, adds numbers properly, and works with a great sense of order and tidiness is praised and gets a star beside her name’ yet ‘the right-brain dominant child who daydreams and stares at distant clouds, preferring to make up stories rather than learn her lesson, is sent home with a disciplinary note,’ (1983:27) my sense is that Curriculum 2005 represents a laudible shift towards whole-brain thinking and my belief is aptly stated by Zdenek (1987:27) when she states that ‘even though these creative gifts may be underdeveloped, that does not mean they cannot be revived.’ It is crucial in designing a new curriculum to be aware of the different functions of the brain hemispheres. It is true that the traditional curriculum which feeds into the world of work encouraged the domination of left-brain individuals, while the intuition of right brain individuals is perceived as not accurate enough as the world we live in is considered rational, logical and needs excellent verbal skills. Curriculum 2005 seems to go a long way to address the imbalance. The question that remains unanswered, however, is: how do we respond to Curriculum 2005 when it comes to addressing the issue of ALs?

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2005. The boundaries of the traditional curriculum have been very 'safe' for teachers and learners, however, Curriculum 2005 requires of them to venture into unknown territory. There is therefore a need to provide well-written and well-researched books. I believe that well-informed textbooks can help bring about a revolution to Africans' way of thinking and remove any fears and anxieties about Curriculum 2005.

Brunswic (1990:4) writes that "it is now accepted that pupil access to a school textbook is one criterion for assessing the quality of education, and that the provision of school textbooks is an effective strategy for improving results." Indeed when one looks at the traditional curriculum and its textbooks, it becomes very clear that textbooks can be used to improve or thwart the educational process. Teachers' classroom methodology is invariably shaped by the practice suggested by the textbook. For example a textbook that fails to work along communicative lines, which include among others group work, pair work and projects, is inclined to reinforce the 'talk-chalk' model of teaching. Similarly language textbooks that work with empty, bland texts will set the tone for the approach to issues in that language. A case in point is the deeply conservative curriculum of the apartheid era which was upheld by equally conservative textbooks.

The importance of the textbook as a critical learning resource is not an issue in South Africa, where an unequal education system was in place. Even in European countries and the United States of America, books are seen to be an indispensable teaching and learning medium. Newmann (cited Farrell and Heynemann (1884:120-1) writes that "books are the main teaching aid in German schools and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. The book remains, in spite of the appearance of newer teaching methods, the principal support of teaching".

Albach and Kelly (1988:3) write that "textbooks constitute the base of school knowledge, particularly in the Third World countries where there is a chronic shortage of qualified teachers. In many instances, teachers adhere closely to texts, using them as the sole source of school knowledge, assigning students lessons contained in the text and testing students only on the knowledge contained in the texts."

John Samuel cited in Reynolds (1997:31) refers to the textbooks as “the lifeblood of an education system” and said the ANC’s ideal would be ‘at least one book per student per subject.’ McCallum (1995:128) pointed out that “textbooks are the most cost-effective form of intervention in the classroom when compared to investments in physical facilities and teacher training. Politically, textbooks have the additional attraction of being relatively easily and quickly ‘implemented’ to governments and to aid agencies wishing to satisfy their respective constituencies, textbooks are visible, tangible and easily ‘measurable’ desirable factors if one is implementing short-term plans.” (Cited in Reynolds (1997:32).

Despite what may seem to be an indisputable role of the textbook in schools, there has been intense scrutiny and criticism, particularly since the late 1970s and the 1980s, where ‘almost all attributes of textbooks [came] under attack’ (Chall & Conard 1991:5 cited in Reynolds 1997:30). American textbooks in particular have been accused of being ‘dumbed down’ (Herlihy (1992:15 cited in Reynolds 1997:30), to meet the perceived needs of as broad a market as possible, and of being superficial in content, lacking academic rigour, and being “easy to read but devoid of literary merit”. (Crismore 1989:133 cited in Reynolds 1997:30)

There are basically two views of the textbook, namely the ‘deficiency’ view and the ‘difference’ view. The ‘deficiency’ view states that there is a need for materials to save learners from teachers’ deficiencies, as they will ascertain that the syllabus is covered, exercises are well thought out ...’ this might lead, at one extreme, to the idea that the best teachers would neither want nor need published teaching materials. At the other extreme, we have teacher-proof materials that no teacher, however deficient, would be able to teach badly with. (Allwright 1981:131-2) The difference view holds that “the expertise required of materials is importantly different from that required of classroom teachers, the people who have the interpersonal skills to make classrooms good places to learn in. For some, this conception may ‘reduce’ the teacher to the role of mere classroom manager. For others, it ‘frees’ the teacher to develop the expertise needed for dealing with language learning in the classroom. [Emphasis original] (Allwright 1981:132).

Part of the transformation process in South Africa involved the Department of Education’s introduction of Curriculum 2005, which initially would encourage teachers to make their own materials for the new curriculum. Some education departments argued that the use of formal textbooks is passé. However, the idea misfired when the home-grown materials simply did not

materialise. There was a realisation that Curriculum 2005 will require new textbooks. As a result, the department had to 'commission' publishing houses to write books, with the added instruction that they write *comprehensive* teachers' guides to *help* teachers come to grips with the curriculum. This complete reversal of departmental policy forced educational publishers into hurriedly writing teacher aids.

Versfeld and Wickham (1998:3) state that some high level educationists believe Curriculum 2005 should be less reliant on books than the traditional education system, but there are other educationists such as Nick Taylor who predict that abandoning textbooks could be disastrous to education in South Africa. Taylor says that "it could cause Curriculum 2005 to increase the disparities between the privileged and the underprivileged. The good teachers, most of them in more affluent schools, will cope at least adequately if they have to. *But the vast majority wont.*" [my emphasis]. In the same paper Versfeld and Wickham cite Joe Muller stating that "worldwide experience of outcomes-based education has been that it works well *only in well-resourced schools.*" [my emphasis]

The Western Cape Education Department's Generic Guidelines for the development of Learning and Support Materials opens with the sentence: "A key feature of any education and training system is that adequate learning and support material is essential to the effective running of the system." (cited in Versfeld and Wickham 1998:2). Since educational transformation in South Africa involves providing quality education for greater numbers of learners, the need for a new generation of textbooks for ALs speaks for itself. In the next section I will explore the challenges and implications of mainstreaming ALs.

### **6.3 African Languages Materials Development in the Context of Curriculum 2005.**

Apple (1986:81) points out that "it is the textbook that often defines what is elite and legitimate culture to pass on." Though the textbook can be partly liberatory, he says, it is also one of the systems that controls society: "Little is left to the teacher's discretion as the state becomes even more intrusive into the kinds of knowledge that must be taught, the end products and goals of that teaching, and the ways it must be carried on." The conservative

apartheid curriculum was a case in point. Kallaway (1984:8-9) aptly points out that “the colonised peoples of Southern Africa were not simply conquered in a military sense; did not lose only their political independence; were not just drawn into new systems of social and economic life as urban dwellers or wage labour. Though all these aspects of the process of colonisation have great importance, the key aspect to be noted here is that it also entailed *cultural and ideological transformation in which schools were major agents.*” [My emphasis]. It is further stated that Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education were designed to control the direction of thought, to delimit the boundaries of knowledge, to restrict lines of communication, and to curtail contact across language barriers. The aim was to dwarf the minds of black children by conditioning them to servitude. (Kallaway 1984:94)

Another central feature of Bantu Education was its hegemonic function. One of its aims was to facilitate the reproduction of relations of production in a docile form, so that these relations would appear natural and based on common sense. “Stressing cultural differences between white and black, and the development of a separate black community, in which black aspirations could be realised, the Bantu Education system would thus be able to prepare Blacks to accept differences as part of the unchallenged order.” (Kallaway 1984:175) He then quotes a statement from the Eislen Commission which states that “The Bantu child comes to school in a basic physical and psychological endowment which differs so slightly, if at all, from that of the European child, that no special provision has to be made in education theory or basic aims. But education practice must recognise that it has to deal with a Bantu child i.e. a child trained and conditioned in Bantu culture, endowed with a knowledge of a Bantu language and imbued with values, interests and behaviour patterns learned at the knee of a Bantu mother. *These facts must dictate to a very large extent the content and methods of his early education.*” [my emphasis].

From the statements above, it becomes obvious that AL textbooks developed within the constraints of Bantu education were ideologically censored, devoid of provocative ideas, intellectually and emotionally barren and only focused on rural stereotypes as the process of Black urbanisation was denied and countered on all fronts by the government of the time. In terms of curriculum it focused on linguistic patterns to some rigid, artificial standard. For the speakers the approach and content of ALs created frustration and resistance to their *own* language. My personal observation is that AL speakers who have little schooling and were therefore not exposed to the dumbing down effect of AL textbooks, speak a rich, idiomatic

variety of the language than a learner who has spent twelve years studying the language. Compared to the best English first language textbooks, AL textbooks demotivated those who had to teach and learn ALs. This has resulted in a dearth of literature and intellectual writing in these languages. Even though a majority of South Africans speak an AL, these languages are insignificant, as the general feeling is that they do not take people anywhere economically.

In her study of the status of Zulu in KwaZulu-Natal, Zungu (1998: 38) cites Slabbert (1994:6) as pointing out that the low status of ALs was aggravated by the shortage of relevant contemporary literature which was a result of censorship, firstly by the Missionaries and later by language boards. "Most African contemporary writers see schools as the only market for their manuscripts and very few of them write literature for its aesthetic value and/or for a public readership." Urban children are said to often reject the prescribed reading material and the Standard Zulu in which these books are written. "They regard it as old fashioned, rural and backward. Apart from a limited number of recordings of certain forms of the Zulu oral literature like praise poems, folk tales, riddles and proverbs, other forms of Zulu oral tradition remain unrecorded." Zungu (1998:40) laments the fact that mother tongue speakers do not value Zulu oral literature because it has not been documented. Zungu's observations seem to hold true for the status of the other ALs. ✓ X1:01a he

Because of the low status attributed to ALs, even the fact that a majority of South Africans speak an AL, these languages are considered 'backward' because they have failed to develop in step with the needs of their speakers who live in the urban areas. Instead there has been a development of other varieties that deviate from the 'archaic standard spoken and written form of the languages.' Zungu (1998:39).

Apple (1986:84) writes that the knowledge that textbooks carry and one's 'ability to deal with it has served as one mechanism in which the economic and cultural reproduction of class, gender and race relations is accomplished, not to recognise this is to ignore a wealth of evidence in the United States, England, Australia, France, Sweden, Germany and elsewhere that links school knowledge - both commodified and lived - to class, gender and race dynamics outside as well as inside our institutions of education.

Reynolds (1997:45) cites a personal conversation with Jan Esterhuysen where he states that “it should be remembered that a good textbook can do the opposite of ‘defining what is elite and legitimate culture : it can be an inspiration to explore, construct and deconstruct knowledge.”

The introduction of Curriculum 2005 has exposed the cognitive and affective poverty of ALs.

As argued earlier, Curriculum 2005 requires a paradigm shift for AL speakers. The content and methodology used to teach these languages are at the opposite end of Curriculum 2005’s demands. AL speaking teachers and their speech communities are expected to make the ‘quantum leap’ from the traditional curriculum, with its traditional content, gender-biased language and premodern values systems to the new (post)modern curriculum. It would be naive for one to assume that attending workshops on Curriculum 2005 will help teachers cross the bridge from the old to the new curriculum. Even if we could assume that teachers are retrained, it will still be an insurmountable task for them to disseminate all the subtleties and (post)modern qualities of Curriculum 2005, as they are still trapped in the old paradigm. I want to argue that for AL speakers, very good (post)modern textbooks can go a long way in helping them make the giant leap to a new paradigm. However it is not possible for AL speakers to write Curriculum 2005 books as it cannot be expected that the very people, whose education and training was traditional and intellectually censored to make this paradigm shift. AL speakers need to first come to grips with the very different philosophy of language teaching, methodology and content before they can write Curriculum 2005 textbooks. It amounts to the need to transform ALs in such a way that they function in the modern social context. This also requires a cultural shift to modernity and a willingness to shed patriarchal cultural values. AL speakers should be able to read the (post)modern world through their own languages. They should be able to demonstrate a critical language awareness approach with regard to mother tongue usage.

Postman and Weingartner (1969:105) write that the meaningful study of language must be about the relationship of language to reality, whether the subject is history, politics, biology, religion, war or anything else. In this way, the student can begin to develop standards by which he can judge the value of perceptions, his own or anyone else’s. “The study of language therefore, is the study of our ways of living, which is to say our ways of perceiving reality.” This is the paradigm shift that AL teachers and learners need to make. These authors further point out that one of the tenets of a democratic society [*such as South Africa* - my emphasis]

is that “men be allowed to think and express themselves freely on any subject, even to the point of speaking out against the idea of a democratic society. To the extent that our schools are instruments of such a society, they must develop in the young not only an awareness of this freedom but a will to exercise it, and the intellectual power and perspective to do so effectively. This is necessary so that society may continue to change and modify itself to meet unforeseen threats, problems and opportunities.” (Postman and Weingartner 1969:15)

Anderson (1995:11) writes that “for the first time in human history we have a truly global civilisation of rapid information exchange and unprecedented mobility.” This kind of civilisation is described as one that is “continually changing form, with unstable boundaries. People now see borders of all kinds as social constructions of reality and feel free to cross them, erase them and reconstruct them”. This to me suggests that AL textbooks need to make learners see irony in all things. They should make them see and understand the world in terms of what it is struggling to become. There is clearly a need to develop AL textbooks that will enable speakers to redefine themselves.

My belief is that (post)modern AL textbooks should equip learners with new vocabularies to talk about their experiences. Such learners will be able to shift to other perspectives and understand that knowledge is relative, and it depends on the system within which one is working. What is true in one system may not be true in another. There is a need to equip learners with enough vocabularies to be able say: ‘it depends’ when asked a question. (Postman and Weingartner 1969:42).

The process of mainstreaming ALs brings about the challenge for these languages to teach cognitive literacy. Reynolds (1997:25-6) writes that from the few studies on ALs school textbooks by non-African researchers (such as Macdonald’s study of Setswana textbooks for Standard 2, which is part of the Threshold Project) she came to the conclusion that “they failed to develop children’s cognitive skills;” and in Anne Smythe’s forthcoming study of primary African language texts, “there is much preliminary evidence that the standard of most language-teaching texts in AL is poor.”

✓ It is therefore evident that as a result of the poor quality of textbooks written in ALs, these languages have failed to function in cognitive areas pertaining to abstract thought. They have been relegated to the realms of mundane or trivial matters and they have not served the higher realms of thinking. There is therefore a need for new AL textbooks that will engage children

in abstract thought in their mother tongue. They should also teach children to engage in higher order thinking through higher order questions.

As stated in the previous chapter, the traditional curriculum seemed to emphasise left-brain activities. This points towards the need for ALs to accommodate right-brain and whole-brain activities. The kind of knowing that is available in ALs will have to be elevated to the level of knowing as in English. For example as the right hemisphere is described as the mysterious, artistic side of the brain, where metaphors are understood and emotions are realised, then it means books written in ALs will have to consider those aspects of the right hemisphere of the brain. Instead of concentrating on left-brain activities such as remembering facts, names and analysing ideas logically, AL books now need to accommodate such activities as drawing and visual literacy. Children need to be exposed to activities that will allow them to engage critically with arts experiences and works. The irony is that ALs in their oral context were always inclined towards right-brain functioning. They are strong on metaphor, music, the visuals and emotion, but there is less focus on the rational and the logical. In the discredited curriculum there was very little room for learners to use the creative processes of art and culture. In actual fact, subjects such as Art and History were accorded a lower status. *in Block schools.*

Perhaps it is prudent to define the role visual literacy in language as it highlights its significance in language learning. Braden and Walker (1980) define visual literacy as the ability 'to gain meaning from what we see and to communicate meaning to others through the images we create' (cited in Seels 1994:103). From visual texts learners are taught that there are many ways of communicating. Looking at visual texts is also part and parcel of reading, as learners are taught the ability to extract meaning from symbols as opposed to parroting sounds. Good visual texts have the ability to develop critical and creative thinking, which enhances effective communication.

This aspect of engaging with visual knowledge does not exist in AL textbooks. Most of the textbooks have written texts and learners are expected to grapple with words. As the traditional curriculum emphasised rote learning, there is a wrong perception that words can be easily memorised to be regurgitated in the examination. AL speakers need to understand that good visual text could be more powerful than the written one, as it activates the right brain's ability to see things spatially, globally and non-verbally. For ALs to adhere to the demands of

Curriculum 2005, there needs to be a shift to AL textbooks that will use dense visual texts that render enough information to ask questions, pique curiosity, extend viewpoints, refresh wonder and to be experienced again and again.

AL textbooks also need to include more drawing activities. Unlike in the traditional textbooks, where drawing was considered a way of filling in time, Curriculum 2005 demands textbooks that will consider drawing as an integral part of the learning process. Whatever learners draw does not have to be assessed, learners are encouraged to freely express their opinions, imagination and emotions. Drawing is believed to contribute to the child's emotional and aesthetic growth, as well as in fine motor co-ordination. At the same time learners are taught the ability to express meaning in symbols. Drawing can be used to record ideas, facts, and thoughts and for communication with others. It does not necessarily have to be neat.<sup>4</sup>

Blacquiere relates the need for visual learning to basic literacy and comprehension of school texts (at their face value); he draws attention to the lack of visual literacy among the 'graphically inexperienced', which, in the context of his study, is a reference mainly to black South African children, many of whom are rural. Textbooks, he argues, have a responsibility to provide intentional and systematic training in visual literacy by including simple strategies such as reminding pupils to look, for example, 'at the picture on the right' (1995:84-128).

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1. Curtiss gives a more detailed explanation: 'Visual literacy is the ability to understand the communication of a vital statement in any medium and the ability to express oneself with at least one visual discipline. It entails the ability to: understand the subject matter and meaning within the context of the culture that produces the work, analyse the syntax-compositional and stylistic principles of the work, evaluate the disciplinary and aesthetic merits of the work, and grasp intuitively the Gestalt, the interactive and synergistic quality of the work (1987:3 cited in Seels 1992:104)

At a more elementary and focused level, the term has been used to refer to pupils' ability to comprehend textbook illustrations (Langhan 1993:31) and to understand graphs, tables, and the way in which texts are set out (Blacquiere 1995). Sless 1984 cited in Seels (1992:99) shows that visual literacy enables us to comprehend and create visuals, but very importantly, 'it is a method or process for thinking' (Hortin 1992:25). Visual knowledge has been described as essential for creativity and problem solving. Piavio (1978) maintains that it is impossible to do higher order thinking without using imagery (cited in Seels 1992:99). I also believe that the use of visual images encourages higher order thinking because from the pictures learners are asked to imagine, evaluate and state their views and opinions, which may not necessarily be the case in written texts.

Textbooks also have a responsibility to facilitate visual literacy by being good models of visual clarity and cohesiveness and having a sense of flow that pupils can follow. Miller refers to visual learning as a weapon against the barrage of manipulative images that consumer societies are exposed to: 'Students need to be educated that images speak, and that there are values and priorities and meanings embedded in images ... What's valuable about ... making visual literacy a basic part of education is (that) it will take materials which are primarily directed at the emotions and the senses and will reposition them within the framework of critical reasoning and thought. All we see is erotic, the allure, the aesthetic side when in fact what those images are doing is evoking the kind of consumer behaviour which perpetuates an economy predicated on waste ... People have to be taught to use their own minds ... and gain some kind of control over this oppressive atmosphere. (Cited by Moyers 1989 in Seels (1992:108). Bruner (1966) describes the function of visual literacy as 'the pleasures of viewing our environment more richly' (cited in Seels 1992:100). In harmony with the values embedded in visual literacy are the humanistic aspects underpinned by Curriculum 2005. This is the topic which I shall address in the next section.

#### **6.4 The Humanistic demands of Curriculum 2005**

The right hemisphere of the brain has also been described as the side of the brain, which is in touch with the emotions. To respond to the neglect of the emotions in the traditional curriculum, AL textbooks have to made up of liberal and humanistic texts. Moskowitz (1978:11-12) describes humanistic education as "related to a concern for personal development, self-acceptance and acceptance by others ... (and) it takes into consideration that learning is affected by how students feel about themselves." Esterhuysen (1994:51-9) has referred to the damage caused by the debilitating effects of apartheid, poverty and the fear that have often accompanied them, and which affect great numbers of children in South Africa. He explores the possibility for 'damage control and mending of frayed psyches through the exposure to healing language experiences (54). Drawing on Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of human needs, he makes the point that "children are only able to pay attention to social issues' once the needs for safety, belongingness and love, and esteem are realised".

ALs need to accommodate the humanistic requirements of Curriculum 2005. There is a need for textbooks that will have texts that touch repeatedly on the emotions and feelings of

children. The new curriculum advocates that children need to have all their true feelings confirmed and mirrored in order to develop faith in and allegiance to their own experiences. When a child realises that her parents and teachers will never confirm what she senses, it is likely that she will give up and develop a false persona that covers a very fragile foundation. Mirroring children's emotions is self-affirming and reveals to the child who she is and what she is becoming. The new curriculum aims to help children come to an understanding of their deepest emotions and develop an enjoyment of everything that is beautiful. Children need to learn to appreciate their self-worth so as to have self-esteem, a pre-requisite for self-actualisation. Children need to be convinced that they are loved and lovable, valued and valuable to realise their own potential. Taught properly, high self-esteem has students learning to respect themselves as capable, able, and worthwhile people. For traditionalists, high-esteem becomes conceit or arrogance; but then again, corruption of a good idea does not make the idea bad.

If we apply the requirements of Curriculum 2005 to ALs there needs to be a shift. The traditionally authoritarian African curriculum will need to make way for the democratic spirit in the classroom and the community, where children will have personalised relationships with their parents and teachers. It requires that African children be allowed to express their opinions and emotions. There needs to be a shift too from the authoritarian nature of African culture.

Curriculum 2005 may receive lukewarm support from traditionalists as it teaches steeped democratic values. We ought to recognise that schools have always taught values, and that there are, contrary to the opinions of many, a set of basic values that can be agreed upon by almost everyone. All schools should teach such common values as justice, kindness, respect, tolerance, patience and honesty through redeeming texts. A redeeming text is one that frees the child from something that she keeps within herself and that can only be resolved by talking to and sharing it with somebody. A good redeeming text gives the child the opportunity to confront a worrying thing, while in the process her own being is validated. There are many instances where children need redemption. For instance from fear, loneliness, feelings of being ostracised, of losing love and popularity, a deep feeling of jealousy, tension, guilt etc. This will require another shift from traditional African culture, where children are not expected to voice their feelings.

Another humanistic demand made on ALs is the need to develop in children an aesthetic attitude. Zdenek (1983: 29) describes the right hemisphere of the brain as the right brain's ability to "understand metaphors and imagery, is capable of fantasy, stories, dreams." I could call this the 'aesthetic attitude' Bullock et al (1988:12). They describe the 'aesthetic attitude' of textbooks as "a style of perception concerned neither with the factual information to be gained from the things perceived, nor with their practical uses, but rather with the immediate qualities of the contemplative experience itself. Works of art are human productions designed to reward this kind of attention." Reid (1982:24-5) points out that a well developed aesthetic sense requires not only "natural psycho-physical maturity, learning ... and a certain kind of teaching ... but a body of the experience from which different arts draw, and each in their own way transform in embodiment...To be initiated into this can...potentially transform the experience of a whole lifetime. To miss out on it is not only a personal impoverishment, but also, where the impoverishment is widespread, a cultural and social disaster." As they do for visual literacy, the form and content of books have a unique capacity to embody the aesthetic, be it, for example, through the enchantment of art illustrating children's stories, or through the functional elegance of well-designed typography, or through literary content. Books have the faculty, intrinsically and extrinsically (through their medium and their message) to help build up "the cognitive-affective dispositions towards the aesthetic" that Reid refers to, and to add the opportunities we have to explore the "meaningfulness that comes to be known directly through the senses" (24-5) Hemming (1982:160) writes of the need to teach "everything in the context of the human and the aesthetic" because the engagement with the emotions, with feelings, that inevitably arises is so important a part in the whole person's education. 'Feelings', he writes, "is the engine of human effectiveness." The good scientist, for example, is a good scientist because he feels passionately about discovering the truth of things. Education's task, therefore, is to mobilise the emergent feelings of young people "in the service of their own growth towards the attainment of ... involved, effective maturity."

There is a need for beautifully designed AL textbooks with high quality artwork that will tap the aesthetic feelings of the learners and to respond to the neglect of the emotional domain of the right brain. This will signal to children that education is to take their language seriously by packaging it in an aesthetically pleasing format.

The challenge of mainstreaming ALs in the domains of visual, aesthetic, cognitive and humanistic literacy is quite evident. There is clearly a need to write progressive textbooks that will capture the ideals of Curriculum 2005. In the next section I would like to explore the challenge.

### 6.5 The Challenge of Writing Progressive AL Textbooks

It has been argued that AL textbooks are not at the same cognitive, affective and psycho-social level as their English counterparts. It has also been demonstrated that through historical circumstances traditional textbooks did not develop the skills and vision required to write in the new paradigm and that there is a serious need for a profound re-examination of textbook writing and production in ALs. AL speakers are also not well-versed in the demands of the thoroughly progressive Western oriented Curriculum, but ironically the expertise exists among non-AL practitioners. Reynolds (1997:26) reinforces this point when she writes that textbook development in South Africa is still done by urban, non-African authors, editors and illustrators, though over 80 percent of pupils are Africans, roughly half of whom are rural. In the light of this a coalition between AL practitioners and skilled language textbook writers in the Western mould seems to be a creative way out of the dilemma. Even though Curriculum 2005 makes identical demands on *all* languages in South Africa, including English, however, the advantages English has are firstly that the tradition of materials development in line with Curriculum 2005 is well developed in this language. Secondly, there has been a strong research traditions for English and to some extent Afrikaans and the good understanding of the (post)modern world that we have to prepare children for. Therefore I want to argue that a partnership between English and AL speaking practitioners as an intermediary measure is not only feasible, but also necessary. This entails the transposing and translating of texts from English into ALs (blueprinting). There is a need to provide AL speakers with the skills and tradition of textbook writing and the general philosophy of language teaching. When AL speakers have gained the skills, then the next generation of textbooks must be written without blueprints.

I want to emphasise that the process of writing AL textbooks by translating and transposing English blueprints is not unproblematic. The process carries elements of social engineering and possible cultural imperialism. Ake (1998:20 cited in Odora 1993:45) writes that 'the task of development is no longer how a people might move forward on its own terms, but how it

might be transformed by other people in their own image of what they consider it ought to be. From this perspective, development becomes an exercise in self-alienation and humiliation.’ According to Odora (1993:9), the process of acculturation (which is envisaged by blueprinting) loses its innocent definition as “inflow of knowledge that is external to an individual or society. It begins to represent an active process of obscuring social reality as locally perceived, and entrenching particular external versions and interpretations of reality that is then established as a norm.”

As I mentioned right at the beginning of this section, working from blueprints raises a lot of questions, especially at an ideological and socio-cultural level. However, in terms of language development, blueprinting seems to be a necessary step, as bridging the gap between traditionalism and modernity seems to be a prerequisite in the development of ALs. My argument for the development of ALs is based on the notion that the child’s mother tongue plays a crucial role in cognitive development. The belief is that if a child is forced to start operating in a second language before concept formation has been completed in the mother tongue, the intellectual development of the child may be severely affected, leaving her in that intellectually paralysing state of semilingualism. If we assume that language teaching should play a pivotal role in the cognitive development of children and re-dressing the psycho-social ‘damage’ caused by the underdevelopment of ALs, we need to find appropriate materials to entice children back to the elaborated use of their own languages. This educationally informed position goes against what many parents of AL speaking children want, as parents advocate immersion in English from day one of school. We will only convince them of the cognitive, affective and psycho-social value of their own languages in the foundation phase at school, if these languages are cognitively, affectively and psycho-socially as nourishing as the all-powerful English language.

For these very good reasons I can live with AL textbook development from blueprints, as the alternative is linguistic stagnation that may leave the majority in the backwaters of pre-modern culture and thought.

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## 6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the important role played by the textbook in the school context and the need for progressive AL textbooks that will assist teachers make the leap from the traditional curriculum to Curriculum 2005. In the endeavour to write new AL textbooks the need to mainstream and fast-track AL speaks for itself. I have also looked at some of the challenges and implications posed by the requirement to mainstream ALs. I have come to the conclusion that, an intermediate solution would be a collaboration between AL and non-AL speaking practitioners to use the process of blueprinting. Even though it is a fact that translating English blueprints into ALs will be applying a Western paradigm to ALs. In a way children will be taught to have a Western outlook on life and some people may actually view such textbooks as a conscious effort by Western countries to maintain, strengthen and reinforce their dominance over African countries. I also think that it is not fair for one culture to usurp all the space of human diversity under the guise of development, but then again there is a need to develop ALs and my belief is that even though children will lose cultural values which are not mentioned in the translated books, they will gain tremendously in terms of concept development and abstract thought.

## 7 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Summary

The present study set out to investigate how historical conditions in colonial South Africa as well as the premodern character of ALs have adversely affected the scholastic progress of AL children. I also wished to address the disadvantage as essentially a linguistic one.

Literature on language planning, sociolinguistics, curriculum theory and psycholinguistics has been surveyed and the various fields assimilated into the overall theoretical constructs underpinning the study. Research seems to point conclusively that the use of the mother tongue as the language of instruction in the early years has proved advantageous, especially the development of cognitive faculties and psycho-social integration with regard to cultural constructs. It has been demonstrated that children should acquire competence in the mother tongue before switching to English. Failure to fully develop the mother tongue invariably leads to stunted cognitive development.

In Chapter two the latent potential of ALs to develop the cognitive and psycho-social domains of its speakers has been explored. There have also been a host of arguments for the adoption of European languages at the expense of ALs. I concluded in this chapter that there is a need to raise the status of ALs by developing these languages to function at advanced abstract and technical levels.

In chapter three I argued that Curriculum 2005, together with the new Language in Education policy pose challenges that cannot be ignored for ALs. I have also motivated for measures to develop ALs by extensive and liberal borrowing of English linguistic items.

In considering the present low status of ALs as a school subject, the literature on curriculum theory has convinced me that curriculum is not only about content, but also about among other things the kind of knowledge, truth, and values. Through a progressive AL curriculum, AL speakers should develop the critical awareness to function as fully-fledged citizens.

I also considered the challenges that the highly sophisticated and progressive Curriculum 2005 pose for ALs. It was argued that generally speaking AL teachers were not trained to

engage with the many esoteric concepts and terminology, given their attitude that language teaching is essentially about linguistics. Flowing from the dilemma of the under-trained teacher and the lack of progressive methodology in the teaching of ALs, I proposed the use of English blueprints as an intermediary step.

## 7.2 Conclusions

With regard to the status of ALs in education, conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- The African child, due to mother tongue neglect, often shows symptoms of cognitive and psycho-social underdevelopment.
- ALs language programmes fail to develop children's cognitive and psycho-social faculties through linguistic means, given their conservative focus on linguistics rather than value-driven teaching.
- There is a positive correlation between the academic progress of AL children and the degree of cognitive elaboration attained in the mother tongue.
- As a corollary we can state that the condition of semilingualism amongst AL speakers emanates from the underdevelopment of the mother tongue which leads to a similar linguistic condition in English.
- The education and training of AL teachers within the paradigm of fundamental pedagogics precluded them from developing a critical and reflective mindset.
- Unless teachers of ALs are equipped to cope with the tenets of a highly sophisticated AL curriculum, the prognosis for progress in other sectors of Curriculum 2005 is somber.
- It is imperative that under-prepared teachers be furnished with comprehensive and supportive teaching aids in the form of a new generation of textbooks.
- The lack of expertise among AL speakers to write books that conform to Curriculum 2005 necessitates a transitory step in the creation of such books. I lend my support to the use of well-researched and well-structured English blueprints as source material for the writing of AL textbooks.
- A paradigm shift of this magnitude will require extensive lexical borrowing from English.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of this research, I believe that the following recommendations should alleviate the problems associated with ALs in the school contexts:

- Mother tongue ALs must be the medium of instruction for the junior primary phase of education.
- Progressive AL textbooks should be developed in order to facilitate the leap towards the implementation of the requirements of Curriculum 2005.
- The lack of expertise among AL speakers to write progressive textbooks necessitates a partnership between AL speaking language practitioners and their English counterparts. This will entail the transposition and translation of well-researched materials in English into ALs.

### **7.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

- The paradoxical tension between cultural and linguistic maintenance and global culture requires further exploration and ways and means to harmoniously blend these forces.
- There is also a need for research to investigate what is involved in translation and transposition of English blueprints into ALs.
- The implementation of Curriculum 2005 in ALs and the use of new generation books by teachers require ongoing monitoring.

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Zungu?