

**The propagation of Standard Language Ideology: exploring how a
Grade One educator in an urban, linguistically diverse, English-
medium primary school conceptualises language**

Emma-Kate Rowley

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree.
It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the
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Abstract

In the context of unequal access to quality education in South Africa in a first language, and policy that relies upon outdated, inaccurate conceptions of language, this study looks at how a Grade One educator at an urban English-medium school (attended by a linguistically diverse cohort of mostly non-English home language speakers) in Cape Town thinks about and talks about language in her teaching practices. The central question it attempts to answer is: how does Ms L, a Grade One educator at South Star Primary School, conceptualise language in her teaching practices? In other words, what *is* language for Ms L? With an eye to answering this question, I examine the language practices of Ms L alongside the assumptions implicit in her interactions with learners about (what counts as legitimate) language use and language speakers. I draw on current sociolinguistic theory which posits that language is a situated social practice, and contrast this with the conception of language as an identifiable bounded entity that is ubiquitous in policy and curriculum statements. Using concepts from sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, I analysed transcriptions from two weeks of lesson recordings in Ms L's classroom. Ms L's teaching practices pointed to a conception of language as a system of parts, as a measurable skill, and languages as separable objects. Analysis of her language practices showed the use of mainly one named language, English, except during Afrikaans lessons where she attempted to use only Afrikaans, occasionally drawing on English linguistic resources for specific purposes. Learners were strongly discouraged from using more than one language at a time, and use of different languages were strictly demarcated according to the lesson being taught. Aside from this evidence pointing to a conception similar to that evident in policy - of language as an autonomous entity, and languages as distinct and distinguishable objects - many of the ways in which Ms L spoke about language also pointed to a standard language ideology. This is incompatible with multilingualism and is a symbolic devaluing of non-standard varieties and speakers.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ANAs	Annual National Assessments
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
PWCG	Provincial Western Cape Government
SAL	Second Additional Language
SLI	Standard Language Ideology

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Presentation of data and transcript conventions

I present data from the transcripts in the form of excerpts, which I have named with letters of the alphabet. I also refer to numbered Lessons, which indicate the chronological order in which the lessons occurred. The following is a list of the transcription conventions I used, which will assist in the interpretation of the excerpts I provide.

T	Educator
L	Unidentified learner
Ls	Multiple learners
T&Ls	Educator speaking with learners
A, B, C, etc.	Named learners
,	Very short pause
.	Longer pause
(.)	Extended pause
(xxx)	Inaudible/unidentifiable speech
(())	Transcriber comments
<i>Italics</i>	Language other than English
[]	English translation
UPPERCASE	Emphasis
↑	Raised intonation
↓	Lowered intonation

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1. Introduction

The year 2016 saw issues surrounding language in schooling gain prominence when a group of high school students began protesting discriminatory school policies that punished them for using African languages at school. As McKinney and Guzula (2016) note in an online article on the issue, these protests have brought to the fore the link between decisions about language, and power. When I began conducting the research for this dissertation, I did not intend to discuss this link. The central aim of this study was to explore and describe the ways in which a Grade One educator conceptualises language. In other words, my focus was on what the educator believes language *is*, and on how she talks about language and language use. After describing Ms L's language practices, and the assumptions about language evident in her teaching practices, I was faced with the task of analysing these findings further, and to examine what they mean. This is where I was forced to consider issues of language and power: the question, I realised, was not only what *is* language for Ms L, but what is *legitimate* language use for her, and why. This led me to the concept of Standard Language Ideology, and how Ms L's support and propagation of this idea is potentially harmful and marginalising.

This introductory chapter will orient the reader by way of locating this study within its context, and describing what it aims to do. I therefore proceed with a description of the broader context in South Africa and the Western Cape, and go on to describe more specifically the research site and its surroundings. I then provide a rationale for this research, outline the research questions, and provide an overview of the rest of this dissertation.

1.1. Background and context

Policy and reality in South Africa and the Western Cape

Following the Apartheid era, when state policy segregated individuals based on perceived race and home language, there has been an emphasis on encouraging nation-building through respect for cultural and linguistic diversity (The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Accordingly, 11 languages are recognised as official, and multilingualism is the norm in urban settings (De Klerk, 2002). In the Western Cape (the location of my study), Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa are official languages.

The same ideals of respect for cultural and linguistic diversity have been transferred to the context of education, at least on paper. The Language in Education Policy (LiEP; DOE, 1997) recognises the reality and value of linguistic diversity in the country and aims to protect it by promoting multilingualism and mother tongue education. It promotes additive bilingualism, the notion that additional languages should be learned alongside the home language, as a vehicle for promoting multilingualism and mother tongue education. In line with this the language policy of the provincial Western Cape government promotes the learning of the three provincial official languages, also through additive bilingualism (Provincial Western Cape Government, 1997).

While the LiEP promotes the home language as the ideal language of learning and teaching (LoLT), and enshrines the right of learners to be educated through a language of their (or at least their parents') choice, what has tended to occur in reality is a majority of learners being educated through English (not a majority language) from Grade Four onwards. Pluddemann et al. (2004) have shown that English is becoming increasingly dominant, while Heugh (2013) has shown that 80% of learners are learning through English as the LoLT from Grade Four onwards, despite many students lacking communicative proficiency in English.

The school and surrounds

South Star Primary School (a pseudonym) is situated in an industrial and residential area of Cape Town which has in recent years seen an influx of tertiary sector businesses and middle-class residents and visitors. The area is both socioeconomically and racially mixed, with large Coloured South African, Black South African, and migrant populations residing and working there, and fewer, but increasing numbers of white South Africans living and working in the area.¹

The school itself is a formerly Whites-only and subsequently desegregated public school. It is now attended almost exclusively by students of colour, a large proportion of whom are refugees from surrounding African countries. Most learners at the school come from poor or working class homes. The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is English, while approximately two thirds of the learners have first languages other than English, according to the school principal. Upon speaking with an educator at the school, I learned that these languages include Afrikaans, French, isiXhosa, and Shona.

The school is therefore not unlike the majority of South African schools in that it is attended mostly by working class learners of colour who speak first languages other than English. Furthermore, the school has a high proportion of refugees and, following from this, a diverse range of home languages spoken by the learners.

According to South Star Primary School's language policy on their website, the LoLT from Grade R to Grade Seven is English, and time is allocated to languages (as subjects) in the following proportions:

¹ I acknowledge the problematic nature of using race as means of categorising people, and wish to emphasise that I do so without racist intent, but rather to show to what extent in post-Apartheid South Africa society has or has not continued to categorise itself along racial lines.

Grades One and Two:

- 8¾ hours a week English
- ½ hour a week Afrikaans (FAL)
- ½ hour a week isiXhosa (SAL)

Grade Three:

- 6 hours a week English
- 3½ hours a week Afrikaans (FAL)
- 35 min a week isiXhosa (SAL)

Grades Four to Six:

- 4 hours a week English
- 2½ hours a week Afrikaans (FAL)
- ½ hour a week isiXhosa (SAL)

Grade Seven:

- 4 hours a week English
- 2½ hours a week Afrikaans (FAL)
- ½ hour a week isiXhosa (SAL)

The language policy reflects that of the Western Cape, offering in theory all three of the province's official languages. However it also acknowledges the linguistic diversity of its learners, by including sections on how the school plans to develop multilingualism, how it will communicate with parents, and how it will accommodate speakers of minority languages at the school.

Plans to develop multilingualism include the phasing in of information signs in the three official languages of the province, displaying vocabulary lists in classrooms and having educators

encourage learners to develop their competence in the official languages, and phasing in isiXhosa instruction for all Grades, cost permitting. Upon visiting the school I learned that isiXhosa is not yet offered as a subject at the school, and the difficulty of finding qualified isiXhosa educators was cited as a reason for this.

The policy states that communication with parents will be done in English, but the school is seeking alternatives for parents who do not understand English. A proposed solution is to use both educators and learners as interpreters. Similarly, the school plans to assist minority language speakers using peer translators, intervention programmes, and home programmes that assist parents with helping their children.

South Star Primary School's language policy reflects the national Language in Education Policy, with its commitment to additive bilingualism and intentions to develop multilingualism in the school. It also recognises that some of its ('minority language' speaking) learners are disadvantaged by this framework, and addresses the need for accommodating the needs of these learners and their parents. However, the proposed solutions to these issues (including that of developing multilingualism) are vague and noncommittal, and I saw no attempts at implementing these solutions, likely due to the paucity of resources (linguistic, financial, and otherwise) available to the school.

1.2. Rationale

In conceptualising this research, I wanted to think about the ways in which language impacts upon the learning experience. I have noted that a majority of learners in South Africa are being educated through English when it is not their home language, and it has been shown that LoLT can have a profound impact upon learner performance (Cummins, Mirza & Stille, 2012; Alexander, 2005). Learners in South Africa perform consistently badly in national and international assessments, and according to a 2013 draft policy, "poor learning outcomes in

South Africa are to a great extent a result of poor language proficiency and utility” (DBE, 2012; Mullis et al., 2007; Mullis et al., 2012; DBE, 2013:5).

Language is thus an incredibly important factor when considering how to make education in South Africa more equitable. As I discuss in my literature review, policies and curricula as they relate to language in education have been studied extensively and shown to be problematic in how they conceptualise language. I therefore chose to explore conceptualisations of language in education practice, rather than policy, to see what role the practices and assumptions of an educator play.

1.3. The research question

My research seeks to answer the following question:

What kinds of assumptions about, and attitudes towards, language can be shown to inform an educator’s language practices in an English-dominant learning environment where children are not adept in the use of standard English?

1.4. Overview

In this chapter I have attempted to introduce my study, outline what it aims to do, discuss why I have chosen this topic, and describe the context in which it occurs. In the next chapter I review the literature surrounding the ways in which language has been commonly conceptualised in everyday discourse and policy on the one hand, and by applied linguists on the other, and I define the concepts that I rely upon in my analysis. Chapter 3 is a description of the methodology I have used, including how I chose my sample, collected data, analysed the data, and accounted for ethical and validity concerns. My findings are discussed in Chapter 4, where I attempt to answer my research questions. This chapter is divided into three main sections

which correspond to the main themes I identified in my analysis. The discussion chapter draws my findings together and uses the concept of (standard) language ideology to make sense of the ways in which Ms L conceptualises language. Finally, I summarise my main findings and make some suggestions for future research in my conclusion chapter.

2. Literature review and conceptual framework

2.1. Introduction

Since my research is focused on an educator's conceptualisations of language and the consequences of these conceptions for classroom practice, I draw upon literature which outlines the kinds of ideas about language that are prevalent in both everyday discourse as well as South African language in education and curriculum policies - such as the Language in Education Policy [LiEP] of 1997 (DOE), and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS] of 2011 (DBE). In relation to this literature, I also draw on contrasting conceptualisations of language which are informed by current applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research and theory. That is to say, my research is influenced by my own theoretically-informed ideas about language, but I endeavour to make these ideas explicit and to show how they are supported by current linguistic research. Analysing language use and discussing language as a concept would be difficult (if not impossible) if I were to approach language as a kind of neutral concept or phenomenon because of the social and socially variable nature of language-in-use.

The conception of (a) language as (an) 'object', an entity that can be observed independently of other human behaviours, and which can be distinguished from other languages (objects), is pervasive and widely taken to be commonsense in everyday discourse (Heller, 2007). My discussion of this conception of language begins with a description of the features of this view, and then goes on to outline some of the ways in which this conception became accepted in South Africa. In particular I have looked at how the separation of languages arose in South Africa historically, and how this has then filtered into post-Apartheid language policy. I then discuss the 'language as object' conception in relation to current language in education and curriculum policies, and present some arguments for the value of an alternative view of language.

The conception of language as social practice, while not the commonsense view, is consistent with our intuitions about language and our lived experiences of language in the real world. Moreover, it is supported by linguistic research and theory which has observed actual language practices in the real world. I describe the features of this view of language, and in doing so I argue for its accuracy and usefulness to linguists and educationists.

Current linguistic thought brings with it a particular metalanguage for describing linguistic phenomena. I have drawn on some of these concepts in my analysis of teaching practices. My literature review is thus two pronged. I will first discuss the literature on the kinds of conceptualisations of language that exist. This section exists firstly to outline what other scholars have said in relation to my topic, and secondly to present the kinds of assumptions and constructs relating to language that I have tried to identify in my data analysis. I will then discuss the claims made in current research regarding language, and thereby outline and define the concepts that have informed my research.

2.2. Language as object, and the problem with current language in education and curriculum policy

It has been suggested that language in education policy in South Africa talks about language in a way that is contrary to current understandings (from applied linguistics and sociolinguistics) of language. McKinney et al. (2015: 104) explore the “gaps between recent non-essentialist theorising of language” as a social practice, and the ‘language as object’ conception assumed and reinforced in language in education policy and practice. Current thinking says that language is a practice - that is, it is something that we *do*. Moreover, it is a social practice - we do it with other people (or for an audience, real or imagined). I will expand on such social practices theories of language in the next section where I examine alternative conceptions of language.

Language in education policy in South Africa conceptualises language in a familiar but unsubstantiated way: as an autonomous entity that exists out in the world, independent of

human practices (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Makoe & McKinney, 2014). How we conceptualise language as a phenomenon has implications for how we think about or what we count as individual languages. The pervasive and commonsense view (relied upon and reinforced in language policy) is that languages are things, or entities, that can be identified and contained within dictionaries and grammars (Makoe & McKinney, 2014; Joseph, 2004). This view assumes that languages are static, fixed and bounded entities, and that we can distinguish between languages in a systematic, clear-cut way (Makoe & McKinney, 2014). This conception also tends to posit languages as corresponding directly to cultures, identities, or groups of people.

Makoni and Pennycook (2007), who argue that languages are inventions or constructions, point out that the division of languages (and thereby the division of groups of speakers) in South Africa arose out of colonial and nationalistic projects. Makalela (2015: 201) adds that this involved two processes: the early 19th century missionaries identifying, naming and recording (in writing) the languages they encountered, and the 'separate development' ideology and policy of Apartheid, which saw groups of people separated into designated ethno-linguistic Homelands, based on the language each group was perceived to be speaking.

Developing their argument about the construction of languages, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) claim that in classifying and naming the languages that they encountered (classifications which, arguably, indigenous South Africans would not have ascribed to themselves) missionaries and colonialists *invented* these languages. In other words, they did not simply name some pre-existing entities, they "performatively called the languages into being" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007: 10). Along with the invention of languages, they claim, came an ideology of languages as separate, countable things (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). They quote Lelyveld (1993: 194) as saying that the British (in the context of the colonisation of India) "developed... an ideology of languages as separate, autonomous objects in the world, things that could be classified, arranged, and deployed as media of exchange".

The purist and essentialist conceptions of language that arose out of these processes are thus well-established and prevalent, having been sustained by both everyday discourse on language, and linguistic research (Blommaert, 2006). In parallel with Makoni and Pennycook's findings (2007), McKinney et al. (2015: 104) have noted "how resilient essentialist notions of language are and how resistant to change" and furthermore how this reflects the resilience of essentialist notions of race.

Makoni (1999) notes that the linguistic engineering of apartheid has filtered into post-apartheid language planning and policy, as with the enshrining of the (similarly demarcated) eleven official languages. It is this ideology which underlies the notion of linguistic rights (Blommaert, 2005) and additive bilingualism - both widely seen as progressive ideals. However, as De Klerk (2002: 43) notes, additive bilingualism (the idea that additional languages should be learned while maintaining the home language) reinforces a "compartmentalised view of language," which takes multilingualism to be simply monolingualism-plus-other-languages. The implication of seeing languages as parallel and distinct is that multilingual education is seen as a matter of "parallel sets of classrooms in which children remain in hermetically sealed language communities" (Heugh, 2013: 228), which is not only not viable in multilingual urban settings but is also reminiscent of apartheid Bantu Education (and thus directly contradicts the Language in Education Policy's nation-building aims).

Ideally, additive bilingualism would mean that learners can develop their home language and access their curriculum through it, whilst becoming proficient in English (a second language for most South African learners), which will provide them with the cultural capital that English affords its speakers and allow them to more easily enter the job market or higher education (Heugh, 2013). However, discussions surrounding curriculum took a compartmentalised view of language, seeing multilingualism as posing "challenges for teachers" (Heugh, 2013: 219). Heugh (2013: 222) also points out that curriculum policy assumes that learners will from Grade Four onwards learn their curriculum through English, giving the misleading impression that additive

bi- or multilingualism means the same thing as “early transition to English”. Banda (2009) has similarly criticised additive bilingualism and its applications in South Africa as early transition to English, saying that this is simply monolingual education in one language being replaced by monolingual education in another language.

What curriculum policy has called additive bilingualism therefore has its roots in a ‘language as object’ ideology, defining multilingualism as competency in separate named languages. This notion of multilingualism has been widely critiqued, with Makoni and Pennycook (2007: 22) calling it a “pluralisation of monolingualism” and McKinney et al. (2015: 111) referring to a “monoglossic approach to multilingualism”. Multilingualism defined in this way maintains a sharp boundary between languages, enforcing the idea that different named languages or varieties ought to be employed separately and on different occasions. Creese and Blackledge (2010: 105) have said that this conception of multilingualism denotes “two monolinguals in one body”.

Prinsloo (2012) identifies in language in education policy many examples of a notion of language as an autonomous object, pointing out the ways in which policy reinforces the view of languages as distinct and separate. This conception of language and, by extension, multilingualism tends to posit monolingualism as a norm (Makalela, 2015), and in doing so it does not account for the ways in which South African learners communicate. Moreover, as Makalela (2015) points out, this view is limiting for learners who could otherwise benefit from teaching practices that recognise the plurality of their linguistic resources. While multilingualism and translanguaging is the norm in South Africa, language and curriculum policies do not recommend the use of code-switching as a teaching and learning strategy (De Klerk, 2002; McKinney et al., 2015).

This points to an issue with the ‘language as object’ conception: it prioritises languages (as objects) over language users, ignoring the actual experiences of speakers. Prinsloo (2012) notes

that the discourse of language in education policy statements betrays this bias, and that it asserts a false equality among named languages while ignoring the reality of socially constructed linguistic hierarchies. Prinsloo (2012) concludes from his analysis of practice, that learners' use of language is more complex than the notions of language contained in policy can account for.

Makoni and Pennycook (2007: 12) similarly stress how serious the consequences might be in post-colonial settings of how language is conceptualised by saying that "if the notions of language that form the basis of language planning are artifacts of European thinking, language policies are therefore (albeit unintentionally) agents of the very values which they are seeking to challenge." Banda (2010) makes a similar point when he questions whether the dominant Western models of multilingualism in education are suited to the South African context. Multilingualism in (South) Africa differs from multilingualism in many developed countries: for one, South African children tend to acquire language resources that emanate from diverse sources simultaneously from birth, while children in developed countries tend to learn their second language in a formal setting such as school (Banda, 2010).

There is thus a call among sociolinguists for an alternative understanding of language and of language in education. Makoni and Pennycook (2007: 22) call for a "disinvention and reconstitution" of language, which involves understanding the processes whereby languages are invented, engaging with how the ways of understanding languages (what they call metadiscursive regimes) come about and are maintained, and reconceptualising language with a focus on "the real and situated linguistic forms deployed as part of the communicative resources by speakers to serve their social and political goals". Prinsloo (2012: 38) similarly calls for policy which is rooted in an understanding of actual language practice, instead of "romanticised and essentialised notions of language-culture and indigeneity".

2.3. Language as social practice

A social practices' view of language says that named languages as conceptualised above are constructions rather than things that exist in the world and which can be identified and distinguished from one another (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). While the language as object conception is pervasive, this competing view is better equipped to account for our actual language use in everyday life. Makoni (1998) notes that the notion prevalent in official policy in South Africa of languages as separate bounded entities is inconsistent with (that is, it is not based upon, and nor can it adequately account for) the use of urban speech forms that do not correspond neatly to named languages. In other words, our actual language use looks more like a social practice in which participants are drawing from a range of linguistic and communicative resources to communicate for a particular purpose (Heller, 2007). We draw on these resources in ways which make sense in the context in which we are using them, so in this way language is seen as *situated* social practice. Languages are thus not discrete and bounded entities. Rather, the name we give a language (for example, English), is just a placeholder for a "diverse range of language varieties, genres, registers, and practices" (Prinsloo, 2012: 23), and a convenient way to categorise and speak about the world and language users (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). At the same time, however, the standard languages that these names point to have real consequences in practice.

This conception is well-developed and offers a robust lens through which to view language practices, but it also exists to challenge the traditional notion of language as object outlined above. Perhaps the strongest form of the argument against the view of a language as an inherently bounded phenomenon is that of Harris (1980; 1981; 1990), who says that linguistics has been based upon a myth because its supposed object of analysis - language(s) - does not exist. He says, however, that linguistics does not need to be premised upon the existence of languages (Harris, 1990), and offers an alternative to what he calls segregational (orthodox) linguistics. Harris's integrational linguistics rejects the notion of languages as discrete objects,

and posits that language use is integrated with the environment in which it occurs. Integrational linguistics does not assume (indeed it rejects) the autonomy, systematicity, and rule-bound nature of language (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). It calls for a shift in focus from arbitrary system to actual language users (Yngve, 2004).

Linguistic anthropologists, who have long bemoaned the study of language as removed from its context of use, have noted the importance of understanding how communities understand language locally (Kroskrity, 2000; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). A study of language practices should incorporate language ideology, defined by Irvine (1989: 255) as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests”.

In the following section I will expand on the notion of language ideologies as a central concept in my research, and I will outline and define the other concepts, as part of a metalanguage used to describe and explain language practices, which I plan to draw upon.

2.4. Language as social practice: some concepts

The following are some concepts which I draw upon in my research. Since I am taking the approach that language is a situated social practice, I use concepts that this approach deems more useful when describing and analysing language practices than traditional linguistic concepts such as multilingualism and code-switching. All of these concepts assume and acknowledge that interlocutors draw upon a range of linguistic resources when communicating, and that different linguistic resources are valued differently. When used in an educational setting, these concepts allow for learners and educators to be positioned as active agents – as “meaning-makers” and not simply passive users of predetermined language objects (McKinney et al., 2015: 107).

Language ideologies

Language ideologies are the beliefs about, understandings of, and value judgements attached to language, languages and language use (Makoe & McKinney, 2014). Ideologies are informed by discourses, the systems of power and knowledge that "define, describe and delimit what is possible to say and not possible to say" (Foucault, 1980; Kress, 1989: 7). The language ideologies in a society will in turn inform conceptualisations of and uses of language. The notion of language ideology thus encompasses both representations and conceptualisations of language as a phenomenon (where my research focuses), and representations of and value judgements about named languages and speakers.

Heteroglossia/Monoglossia

Heteroglossia is an orientation to language which is defined by Bakhtin (cited in McKinney et al., 2015: 108) as the awareness of multiple varieties, voices, and registers in everyday language use. It is an orientation which can account for multilingualism in a way which does not assume the parallel use of separate, distinct languages, as it does not refer simply to the switching between named languages. Furthermore, it is in opposition to what have been called monoglossic approaches which posit the dominance of one named language, as it emphasises that the linguistic resources we draw upon are different and differently valued (Ivanov, 2000). Thus when McKinney et al. (2015) refer to a monoglossic approach to multilingualism in education, they are critiquing the way in which one language is privileged over another, and the compartmentalisation of languages into distinct categories.

Heteroglossia can be seen as an overarching term which encompasses other concepts that approach language as a set of linguistic resources. These concepts refer to the plurality and variability of linguistic resources as well as the act of moving among these linguistic resources as the situation requires it.

Linguistic resources and linguistic repertoires

A social practices' view of language says that speakers draw on a range of linguistic resources to communicate in particular contexts. Gumperz (1972, cited in Blommaert & Backus, 2011: 2) developed the notion of linguistic repertoire: "the totality of linguistic resources... available to members of particular communities". Blommaert and Backus (2011) and Busch (2012) rework Gumperz's notion of linguistic repertoire to attach it to individuals instead of groups, acknowledging the variation and complexity in individual repertoires (Makoe & McKinney, 2014). Linguistic repertoire is a useful concept in that it allows us to examine whether linguistic resources are being ignored or rendered invisible in settings where some types of linguistic resources are valued above others.

Languaging and translanguaging

Languaging is a concept that arises out of the idea that language is something which is done, rather than a pre-existing entity. It takes a heteroglossic approach in that it acknowledges the diverse range of resources that can be drawn upon in communicating: "languaging" captures this idea in the way that "speaking a language" cannot. Translanguaging is the idea that (multilingual) speakers move among linguistic resources from different named languages (García, 2009). It provides a way of understanding multilingual language practices without assuming that there are clear-cut boundaries between languages.

2.5. Conclusion

I have endeavoured in this literature review to outline two major conceptualisations of language: the compartmentalised view of languages as objects, and the social practices view. The former conceptualisation predominates in everyday discourse and language in education policy, while the latter is supported by current linguistic thought. Thus in outlining these two ways of thinking about *what language is* (or what languages are) I have tried to show the

disjuncture that exists between the theory and the way South Africa's education system has approached the issue of language and multilingualism. I have taken an historical approach by discussing how and why this compartmentalised view of language came to predominate in South Africa, and I have included critiques by various scholars of the realisation of this view in education. I have also discussed the view of language as social practice, which is the view that I take, and I have defined some of the concepts that I have used in my data analysis. These ideas have informed my research, which has attempted to explore the ways in which language has been conceptualised in teaching practice, as opposed to policy, and whether or not the aforementioned gaps between linguistic theory and language planning/policy are evident in a Grade One classroom.

3. Methodology

This research uses an ethnographic-style case study approach to answer the research question. The question requires that I examine both how Ms L is teaching language and how her teaching practices are informed by her assumptions about language. This initially requires an observation and description of these practices, and then an analysis of these practices within the broader context and with reference to existing theory. The issue I am concerned with is therefore qualitative, and must be addressed through qualitative methods. Qualitative methods allow for more meaningful data collection and deeper analysis than quantitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Furthermore, while larger scale quantitative methods may provide extensive data on an issue, a qualitative case study provides intensive data that is able to consider many variables simultaneously. The issue I am concerned with, or the question I am asking, is such that it cannot be adequately answered using numerical data or shallower qualitative data collected on a larger scale. Understanding how an educator thinks and talks about language requires close observation and deep analysis.

3.1. Data collection

I conducted my research in a suburban English-medium primary school attended predominantly by multilingual learners who would be considered second language English speakers (that is, the named language they use at home is something other than English). I chose this site because the learners are multilingual and learning through an unfamiliar language, which is the case for most South African learners.

I had planned to collect data from the two Grade One classrooms at South Star over two weeks, but was unable to obtain consent from the parents of all of the learners in one of the classes. I chose therefore to spend those two weeks collecting data from the one class, and instead of comparing the two I was able to take a more in-depth look into Ms L's teaching practices and the assumptions about language that informed these.

Data collection involved classroom observations (during which I took notes and - when she had a moment to spare - asked the educator questions), and audio recordings of the lessons, which I later transcribed. I also took photographs in the classroom, particularly where I wanted to record the visual materials being used and what was being written on the board. The lessons I observed and recorded were the language (home language English and first additional language Afrikaans) lessons, as these were the lessons most likely to reveal how the educator thinks about and represents language. Two weeks of data collection suited the time frame in which I needed to complete this project, and since I spent all of this time in one classroom, I was able to collect rich and meaningful data about how Ms L was talking about language in her lessons.

3.2. Data analysis

I analysed my transcriptions of the classroom recordings in a three-pronged fashion. I first read through all of the transcripts, making notes where I saw patterns emerging (or things which

contradicted these patterns). In my analysis of the transcriptions, I also drew on what I knew about the context from my observations and the notes that I had taken. Keeping in mind my research questions, I was looking for instances in which the educator made any explicit or implicit claims about language and language speakers, as well as her own language practices and the methods she used to teach languages. I therefore focussed primarily on the educator's utterances and practices, but these were of course considered in relation to the learners' responses. Once I had done this I could identify the themes that were common to most of the lessons. I then once again went through the transcripts, coding the themes that I had identified and inserting these themes and the data to support them into a document. I analysed this data in relation to the concepts in my conceptual framework. I was able to analyse the educator's and the learners' language practices using the concepts (such as linguistic repertoire and translanguaging) that I cover in the final section of my literature review. Using the other concepts outlined in my literature review, I then analysed the assumptions about language that the educator relied upon and was able to come to conclusions about how the educator was conceptualising language. My analysis resulted in three main findings about the educator's conceptualisation of language, which were then written up into the three sections of my findings chapter.

3.3. Validity concerns

Qualitative research, and in particular interpretive research such as mine, faces particular concerns with respect to validity because of its interpretive focus: it does not claim or attempt to make objectively neutral statements about the world. Ensuring validity therefore involves measuring the account of the phenomenon against what the research claims to be providing an account of. As Maxwell (1992:288) notes, there can be multiple accounts of the same phenomenon from different perspectives, and there is no way to provide a neutral or objective account of a situation. Validity is thus less to do with absolute truth and more to do with the trustworthiness of an account. As far as case study research goes, the concern is to provide a

telling account rather than a typical account. The research aims to examine the data through the lens of the theoretical relationships that I am interested in exploring.

I have attempted to ensure descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992) by recording and transcribing the lessons as accurately as possible, so that my descriptions of the classroom practices would be as similar as possible to someone else's descriptions of the same lessons. The issue of interpretive validity (what the phenomena being studied mean to the participants; Maxwell, 1992) is of concern in the type of analysis I have conducted. Gee (2011: 30) points out that analysing situated meaning is difficult because of the 'frame problem': there are infinite aspects of context that may or may not affect the meaning of an instance of language in use, and it is impossible to consider every aspect or to be certain that the aspects you have considered are relevant. However, Gee (2011: 31) notes that this is a problem faced in our everyday interpretations of language, and we overcome it by deciding unconsciously what is relevant. In the case of research, Gee (2011: 32) says that all discourse analysts can do is argue for the relevance of the aspects of context they have considered for the people whose language use is being studied. I have attempted to do this firstly by providing a broad account of the context of my research in the introductory chapter, and secondly by being sensitive to the relevant context in my analysis (for example, I make claims about the educator's emphasis on testing, but acknowledge that this emphasis is influenced by contextual factors such as the education system, school, and time of year at which I was collecting data).

Finally, I have attempted to make explicit that the data I gathered and the account I provide of how an educator at this particular school conceptualises language is only a small-scale snapshot of teaching practice in South Africa.

3.4. Ethical concerns

Upon gaining access to the research site, I obtained informed consent before data collection by having consent forms signed by the learners' parents/guardians and the educator. As mentioned, this meant that I was compelled to alter my original plan of collecting data from two classrooms since I did not receive sufficient consent from one of them. While this meant I could not collect as much and as varied data as I had hoped, I felt compelled to take issues of consent and ethics seriously.

In the consent forms, I explained that I would be present for the lessons, that they would be audio-recorded, that these recordings would not be made publicly available, and that I would not reveal the names or identifying details of educators, learners, or the school. (In writing up my research, I changed the names of the school and educator.) I also explained simply the kind of research I would be doing (analysing the ideas about language), and made it clear that participants might withdraw from taking part in the research at any time. I explained to the educator verbally what the data collection would entail, and she explained this to the learners. I undertook to minimise any harm that my research process might have caused to participants and society as a whole (which, based on the small scale and non-invasiveness of my research, was very little). I received ethical clearance for my research at the proposal stage from the School of Education at the University of Cape Town acting on behalf of the Humanities Faculty's Research Ethics Committee.

4. Findings

In this chapter I will present the findings of my research in three sections which correspond with the themes I identified in my analysis. Cognisant of the fact that the class Ms L teaches is comprised of mostly non-fluent speakers of English with a variety of home languages (and therefore a variety of accents), I first discuss her treatment of language as a neutral system removed from social practices. I then show how she endeavours to enforce a strict demarcation of individual named languages in her lessons. In the final section of my findings I discuss Ms L's emphasis on testing and how this points to her conception of language as primarily a skill.

4.1. Language as system

One of the dominant ways in which Ms L talks about language is consistent with the idea that language is a system more than a malleable communicative resource and best taught in parts, going from simple to more complex. She talks about language as made up of individual parts, and her teaching practices often involve isolating these individual parts and helping learners to identify and understand how these parts relate to each other. In this section I will discuss how Ms L conceptualises language as a system in two sections: the phonics approach to teaching reading, and the breaking down, rebuilding and categorising of language. In these sections I discuss Ms L's teaching practices and provide examples from my transcriptions of her lessons to show the various ways in which she conceptualises language in this way. I conclude this section by exploring how these practices relate specifically to the conception of language as a system, and consider some implications thereof.

The phonics approach to teaching reading

Throughout Ms L's lessons she encourages the use of sounding out as a strategy for reading. Sounding out is a common tool utilised in the phonics approach to the teaching of reading. The

phonics approach involves teaching learners to read and write by helping them to understand the relationship between the graphemes on a page and the phonemes that they are supposed to represent, and by fostering their phonemic awareness (their ability to distinguish between phonemes). Sounding out usually involves the learners isolating the individual sounds in a word and articulating them aloud in order, and then reading out the entire word. An example of sounding out can be seen in lesson one, as shown below in Excerpt A.

Excerpt A

T: And all together first word

Ls: Puh-oh- tuh pot

T: Again

Ls: Puh-oh- tuh pot

T: Next one

Ls: Kuh-oh- tuh cot

T: Again

Ls: Kuh-oh- tuh cot

In this example we see the learners (in unison) isolating and articulating the phonemes that make up the words 'pot' and 'cot', namely [kɒt] and [pɒt]. The lesson continues in this way, with learners reading, by sounding out, a list of basic (consonant-vowel-consonant) words.

Before sounding out can be taught, learners are generally taught the alphabet. In particular, they learn what I will call the phonetic alphabet: what the 26 letters of the English alphabet usually or often sound like. Lesson 5 begins with the learners singing a version of the phonetic alphabet that they have evidently learned and practised before. Ms L introduces the lesson by saying "we quickly gonna go through our sounds" and then "we quickly going to go through our letters of the alphabet" indicating that this lesson is going to be about reinforcing what the learners have learned about the relationship between letters of the alphabet (graphemes) and the sounds they represent (phonemes) - in other words, phonics. The educator emphasises this when she says "we know what a huh sounds like, but when you have to write it on paper, then

you think oh! What does it look like... So now is your opportunity to look at what the sounds look like". She emphasises the need to understand the relation between the visual (letters) and the aural (sounds), asking the learners to "take a picture with [their] eye," "hear the sounds," and "be able to write it". It is clear that the educator does not want the learners to perform the alphabet singing routine simply for the sake of it: "DON'T let it just be a song. You need to LEARN, okay?"

In this lesson the educator has a large chart with the letters of the alphabet, in lowercase and uppercase, in the front of the classroom, and she points to the letters as the learners sing. After singing out the phonetic alphabet, the educator and learners then engage in a back and forth routine involving naming the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding phonetic versions. As seen in Excerpt B, Ms L once again rationalises the need for this activity to the learners by saying that it is about learning what the letters look like. This lesson therefore has both visual and aural (and, arguably, musical) components, to correspond with the grapheme-phoneme relationship that is being taught.

Excerpt B

T: ... We need to know what the small, and remember I said I'm going to change the word small, to lowercase, because some of the small letters are loong ((lengthens the vowel in "long")), so the lowercase letters and the capital letters, okay? Or we can call it the uppercase letters. So I want you to know which two match. So when we sing our song, don't just sing the words, I want you to LOOK. Take a picture, and THINK B about which letters match and what it looks like.

Lesson five becomes more complex when Ms L moves onto grapheme combinations. Excerpt C illustrates how learners are taught that when particular graphemes appear together in a word they result in new sounds. This presents a particular challenge for a learner using the sounding out approach, since now individual graphemes do not correspond neatly to particular sounds. Rather, when particular graphemes are paired in a word they stand for a different sound that

cannot be interpreted by sounding out letter one and then letter two. Excerpt C shows how Ms L attempts to teach this concept, while Excerpt D shows how she then incorporates the newly learned sounds into her sounding out strategy.

Excerpt C

T: ...Now this is what English is like. We learnt the sounds, but we can make NEW sounds. When we make, when we put sounds together as friends. When some sounds come together, they make a new sound... So we all going to look at them now. The first one, is made up of a sss, and a huh. And when the sss and the huh come together, who knows what sound they make?... I don't want a word, I just want a sound. Right. Who knows what that SOUND is? It's - you can't hear the sss anymore, it's hidden in the sound

L: Ssshh

T: Very good, say ssshh

Ls: Sssshhh

T: Say sshh

Ls: Ssshh

T: When you want someone to be quiet you say

Ls: Ssshh

T: Right, now when a sss and a huh come together, you DON'T hear sss, and you DON'T hear huh. It makes a NEW friend, and you hear a?

Ls: Ssshh

Excerpt D

T: Right, go to the next word. Now we going to sound it

T with Ls: Rrrr - a - ssh rash

T: Can you look on the board quickly. This is how I want you to point watch. Can you look at my one I'm gonna SHOW you and then you do your one. ((pointing to sounds)) rrr - a - and I make a swing - sssh. Rash. Watch my finger again.

T with Ls: Rrr - a - ssh rash

T: Let's do it.

Ls: Rrr - a - ssh rash

T: Again

Ls: Rrr - a - ssh rash

T: Now, if you know what a rash is, put up your hand

Excerpt D shows how Ms L then incorporates the learned letter combinations into her sounding out approach to reading. She has provided a list of words with these new sounds in them and is asking the learners to read - by sounding out - the words. Where graphemes are paired, learners are expected to sound them out as if they were one grapheme, and the educator provides a pointing strategy to assist the learners in doing so. Excerpts C and D both illustrate how the educator attempts to integrate the learned words or sounds with existing knowledge that learners have, for example when she says “when you want someone to be quiet you say” to illustrate the “ssh” sound, and when she engages the learners on their understanding of the word “rash”. Arguably when the educator does this she is trying to incorporate context and function into her teaching of new words: instead of simply telling learners how to pronounce a set of graphemes she engages them in a discussion about in which context and for which purpose a particular word might be used.

Lesson 5 continues with a phonic drill: learners sound out words containing the newly learned “sh” combination, in unison from a list that the educator has provided. This activity follows the initiation-response-feedback pattern common to such classroom discourse. See for example Excerpt E, in which the educator initiates by instructing the learners to read out the next word, provides feedback by saying not enough learners were taking part, and then once again initiates by asking the learners to repeat the last word. She then provides feedback (“no fingers”), initiates once more by asking the learners to repeat, and so on. Most of the rest of this activity involves a back and forth of initiation and response: the educator initiates either by asking learners to repeat the word, or by instructing them to read the next word.

Excerpt E

T: ... Right. Next word.

T with Ls: Ssh - eh - I shell

T: That was like, ten children. Don't shout, but I want to hear everybody. Again.

T with Ls: Ssh - eh - I shell
T: No fingers, again
Ls: Ssh - eh - I shell
T: Very good. Next one
Ls: Sh - eh - duh shed
T: Again
Ls: Ssh - eh - duh shed
T: Next one
Ls: Ff - i - sh fish

In this lesson we also see two more instances where the effectiveness of the sounding out approach is called into question. When the learners are to begin reading out their list of words, the educator notes that the first word, “shoe”, cannot be sounded out. Instead she asks the learners to “just say” the word. Presumably she is talking about the irregular spelling of the word, in particular the second syllable, “oe” which is usually pronounced [u:], but which would sound very different if sounded out. The educator calls this a “problem” (see Excerpt F), but does not explain why it is a problem. Instead, she tells the learners what the word is, repeats it, and then asks them to repeat it back to her a few times. This is how the educator deals with the mismatch between the sounding out approach, and the non-systematic relationship that in fact exists between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes).

Excerpt F

T: Now we have a little bit of a problem. Because the first word, umm, we can't really sound, so we just going to SAY the first word. POINT to the first word. And if you don't have a flip file you need to be able to be looking at someone who does. Okay. Right point to the first word, and, oh sorry stop stop stop. Can you go to the SECOND half where the ssh sound is. Okay. The SECOND half. Shoe. Say the word shoe.
Ls: SHOE
T: Again
Ls: Shoe
T: Again
Ls: Shoe

Later in this lesson (see Excerpt G) we see a similar problem arise. The learners are attempting to sound out the word “ship”, and the educator interrupts them to correct their pronunciation. This correction could be seen as both evidence of a limitation of the phonics approach, and of how the educator corrects ‘nonstandard’ pronunciations. Some of the learners could be pronouncing “ship” as [shi:p] because in their accents the phoneme /i/ in this context is realised as [i:]. While the learners at this school come from a range of linguistic backgrounds, it- can safely be assumed that for many of the learners this is the case, because such vowel pronunciation is very typical across multiple African languages. This says something important about language standardisation and the delegitimisation of nonstandard forms in the classroom, which I will expand upon in later sections. Whether or not the educator intended to impose standard language norms on the learners, however, this interaction also illustrates a limitation of the sounding out approach (and phonics generally) with respect to accents and nonstandard pronunciations. Again the educator deals with this contradiction by correcting the transgression and telling learners that this is simply the way it is (“in this word it’s a uh”).

Excerpt G

T: Next one

Ls: Sh - ee - puh

T: Right, Grade Ones remember, that the word ship, be quiet ((claps)). The word ship, has a UH and not a i, okay it's the same letter, but we say, sometimes we say ee sometimes we say uh. So in this word it's a uh. All together

T with Ls: Sh - uh - puh ship

T: Again

Ls: Sh - uh - puh ship

In their lessons later on in the week, learners are expected to apply the skills they have learned, involving isolating the sounds or graphemes in words to individual written work - skills that were heretofore engaged only in a group setting with the entire class. In Lesson 7, learners are completing a worksheet which requires them to, among other things, match lowercase and uppercase letters, and identify and write down the initial and middle sounds of words. Lesson

10 involves a similar task, while in Lesson 12 the learners have to write a test demonstrating the skills they are supposed to have learned. The educator talks the learners through the test, reading out and explaining the instructions multiple times, and allowing them time to write down their answers. One of the test questions requires learners to fill in the missing sounds in given words (represented by pictures), and is thus testing their ability to isolate and distinguish between phonemes: “Don’t MIX up your letters. You MUST know the difference between a duh and a buh,” the educator reminds them.

One of the skills being tested is the ability to group words into what the educator calls “families” - in other words, the ability to identify the features that particular words have in common. As I illustrate in the following section, this aspect of language learning (and testing) links conceptually with the phonics approach discussed above.

Breaking down, rebuilding, and categorising language

As with the phonics approach to teaching reading, which attempts to foster an understanding of phonemes (what they sound like, look like, and how they change and combine), many of Ms L’s teaching practices were also centred around teaching the learners about other ‘bits’ of language. By this I mean that she spoke about language as something which can be analytically broken down into its various parts: sounds or letters and their combinations (as discussed above), words, groups of words, sentences, and stories. In this section I will describe and illustrate the various ways in which Ms L teaches learners to break down, combine, and categorise pieces of language.

One way in which Ms L reinforces the idea that language can be taken apart and rebuilt is by teaching the learners about individual parts of language in isolation. In the above section, I discuss Ms L’s use of phonic drills and sounding out, which can be seen as one example of her attempts to teach language by isolating it into its parts. The lessons generally follow a pattern in which the smallest bits of language are taught first, and then this knowledge is gradually built

upon. Thus, as shown in the excerpts and discussions above, the learners sing their phonetic alphabet before doing phonic drills and then learning about how letters combine to form new sounds. In other lessons, learners learn about how sounds combine into words, how words combine in a particular order to form sentences, and then these lessons are put into practice when learners are required to construct their own original sentences and read or listen to stories. There is therefore a hierarchy that exists between these bits of language, from more simple (individual sounds and letters) to more complex (original sentences and stories), and within the lessons the educator generally follows this ordering chronologically.

In the above section on phonics I discuss in detail how Ms L teaches the concept of sounds and how to differentiate between them and combine them. For example, in Excerpt C above, after having done a phonic drill with the learners, Ms L talks about how sounds combine as “friends”. In the same lesson Ms L refers back to a previous lesson in which the learners had come upon the same concept. She is referring to Lesson 3 in which the class is discussing ‘question words’. A learner points out that many of the question words contain the same two letters - W and H - and the educator repeats this insight to the class. This interaction exemplifies the way in which being able to isolate bits of language is valued in Ms L’s classroom. The teaching and testing of the concept of the initial and middle sounds of words (also discussed above) illustrates similarly that Ms L wants learners to be able to understand how language can be taken apart and pieced together.

At the next level of the aforementioned hierarchy, Ms L teaches how sounds (or letters - she uses the two interchangeably) combine to form words. When teaching learners how to read, she encourages them to sound out the words, which as I have mentioned involves isolating the individual sounds in a written word and saying them aloud (see for example Excerpt A above). Similarly, when learners are required to write (as in their test in Lesson 12) they are encouraged to sound the word that they are trying to spell out. Sounding out in a test is to be done silently, the educator points out, which is understandable in this context but also points to the fact that

by this point the educator expects the learners to be able to identify and distinguish between phonemes without actually articulating them aloud. During the test in Lesson 12 Ms L makes an exception for a learner who appears to be struggling, and walks the learner through the process of writing the word “hat”.

Excerpt H

T: ((Speaking quietly to one learner)) Hat, sound hat. Sound it. SOUND it. No, I'm not talking to you. Grade Ones quiet. Sound it for teacher. What's first in hat?... Right sound hat for me. No. What sound do you hear first? Now write it. No, just write it. Next to my finger. No, other side... Sound the word hat. Don't look, listen, listen. What comes after the huh?... Sound hat for me.

L: Hat

T: Sound it. You said the huh, now sound the next letter.

In Excerpt H above Ms L is attempting to assist a learner with answering a test question, evidently without disadvantaging other learners by providing too much information. Thus she repeatedly instructs the learner to sound out the word they are attempting to spell, while the learner's responses seem to indicate that they either do not understand the instruction, or they do not know how to perform the task required of them. Much like the examples provided above, Excerpt H illustrates another way in which being able to identify and distinguish between phonemes is a valued skill: Ms L emphasises it as a strategy to successfully complete the test questions.

In Lesson 1 we see Ms L moving from the level of words to that of sentences when she asks learners to use the words they have just learned in sentences.

Excerpt I

Ls: Huh-oh-puh hop

T: Right, now I'm going to ask a question. Who can give me - I don't want you to put up your hand. I want everyone to think of a sentence with the word HOP in it. Put down

your hands. Think of a sentence with the word hop in it. Don't tell anybody. Right, let me see. Umm. Stand, A give us your sentence, with hop in it

A: I can hop

T: I can hop. Everybody

Ls: I can hop.

T: Now, I want you to think of a sentence with the word dog AND hop in it. One sentence, with the word dog, and with the word hop in it. Put down your hands. Everybody must think. Hands down. Hands down... Right. I think I'm going to choose B. Can you give me a sentence with dog AND hop in it?

B: The dog hop

T: The dog?

B: hop

T: We gonna change it slightly. The dog hops. All together

T&Ls: The dog hops

This exercise, shown in Excerpt I above, is arguably geared towards furthering the learners' understanding of the words themselves, but it certainly occurs in a transition from simple to more complex: the learners must go from sounding out the individual words in unison to constructing sentences that incorporate the learned words. Thus the individual learners who are called upon to contribute their sentences must exhibit both an understanding of the word and the context in which it can be used, as well as an understanding of how to construct an English sentence according to the educator's (and the curriculum's) criteria. This exercise also provides an opportunity for the educator to expose the learners to the rules of standard English. In the case of the above excerpt, the rule that is transgressed ("the dog hop") and subsequently corrected ("the dog hops") relates to subject-verb agreement.

In Lesson 6 Ms L talks more directly about sentences and the rules for constructing them. She begins the lesson by defining what a sentence is, and giving examples of what do and do not count as sentences.

Excerpt J

T: Okay good, hands in the laps. Now, do you remember yesterday - I think it was yesterday morning, ja - I spoke to you about a sentence. I said to you sentences are groups of words put together that give you an idea. I can't say run table must come laugh.

Ls: ((laughing))

T: Run table must come laugh. Is that a sentence?

Ls: No

T: No, they are just random words. Right, if I say, come and run to the table. Does that make sense?

Ls: Yes

T: You know I want you , you must come, and you mustn't walk you must run, and you must run to the table. It gives you an idea. So that is a sentence.

Ms L defines sentences as groups of words that combine in a certain way in order to convey an idea. She emphasises that the words cannot be combined randomly but must be in a particular order for them to count as a sentence and not “just random words”. In the final utterance of the above excerpt Ms L breaks down the meaning of her example sentence in order to show that it conveys an idea.

She then proceeds to discuss the rules regarding writing sentences: “there’s a certain way of writing it”. At this point she emphasises that sentences must start with capital letters and end with full stops, and she reminds the learners of this throughout the lesson as she tries to teach a strategy for reordering a group of random words into a coherent sentence. Throughout the lesson Ms L points to a word or group of words and asks the class whether or not it is a sentence. She has written a sentence onto a large piece of paper and then, in front of the learners, cut the sentence up into individual words and stuck them onto the board in a random order. Including this visual component helps to reinforce the notion of breaking apart and rebuilding bits of language. The strategy that Ms L provides for putting words into the correct order involves identifying the word with the capital letter and putting it first, identifying the word with the full stop and putting it last, and then using context, existing knowledge, or trial

and error to place the remaining words. Thus she is not explicitly teaching grammar (the parts of speech and how they combine), but rather teaching the learners how to answer a test question (test preparation is something I will discuss in further detail in another section).

In Lesson 10 this activity is repeated, only the object of the lesson is for learners to re-order a given set of randomly ordered words on their own. The task has therefore become more complex as learners must apply what they have learned to individual work, and they must write the sentences down themselves. As shown in Excerpt K, the educator does use scaffolding techniques to ease the learners into the task, by reviewing what they have already been taught and going through an example with them before leaving them to work on their own.

Excerpt K

T: Remember, when you have a sentence that is mixed up. WHAT is the clue for the first word? What is the clue for the first word? I don't just have three children in my class. It's the same chil- yes Q. Any sentence must start with what? What must a sentence START with? Q

Q: A capital letter

T: Excellent! A sentence MUST start with a capital letter. So here's my sentence all mixed up. What is the first word on the board?

Ls: THE

T: What is the next word?

Ls: See

T: What is the next word?

Ls: Sleep

T: What is the next word?

Ls: Hamster

T: Again

Ls: Hamster

T: Right all together

Ls: The sleep see hamster

T: Okay. What will my FIRST word be.

...

T: Right so S has found the word see. Does see start with a capital letter?

Ls: YES

T: Now, the LAST word. What will the LAST word be?

L: Hamster!

T: NO, I want you to think. Look. Um, V

V: Sleep

T: Right, V how did you know that sleep will be the last word?

V: Because it has a full stop

After this activity in Lesson 10, learners who have completed their assigned task are instructed to use the rest of the lesson to write down their own original sentences, using a list of given words. Since this comes after a lesson on structuring sentences, we can assume that the educator wants the learners to apply the skills they have just practised - with an added level of complexity. The learners are given a list of nouns with accompanying pictures and asked to write two sentences about each picture.

Excerpt L

T: Right, so behind one of the other pages, you choose the words you going to write about. You can write a "I see" sentence. So let's say you say "I see a pram". Then I want you to TELL me what I want you to DESCRIBE the pram. Um. The pram is, and you look for your describing words. The pram is BIG the pram is HEAVY the pram is WET the pram is LIGHT the pram is DIRTY. Find the describing words in your? FLIP file. Okay. So you gonna write two sentences about the pram.

In Excerpt L we see the educator instructing the learners to draw on lists of words that have already been given to them in their flip files. This activity therefore does not require much vocabulary recall, but does require a certain level of comprehension with respect to the words themselves and the appropriate ways to combine them. Therefore, while much of the content is already provided, this task is far more complex than re-ordering given words since it requires learners to successfully convey ideas on their own by combining words in a meaningful way. Suddenly, then, the emphasis on mechanical combination is displaced by a requirement for coherence at the level of meaning-making.

While the bits of language are taught and learned in a gradual progression from simple to more complex, the educator also seems to emphasise the ways in which these components are distinct from one another. Aside from fostering an understanding of the language as a whole, Ms L wants learners to be able to distinguish between sounds or letters, words or sentences. One could argue that in a sense she is trying to foster an understanding of how to talk about language and its parts. In other words, she is helping the learners to develop a metalanguage. At various points in the lessons I observed Ms L explicitly distinguishes between sounds, words, and sentences. I have already discussed how she defines a sentence and limits what counts as a sentence. In the lesson I discussed, Lesson 6, Ms L deliberately checks whether the learners have understood her definition of sentence by pointing to an individual word and asking whether the class thinks it counts as a sentence. At other points she distinguishes between sounds and words, for example in Excerpt M below.

Excerpt M

T: And when the sss and the huh come together, who knows what sound they make? Don't shout out, I'm already hearing uh-uh! No. Hands down. I'm going to ask the question again, and we going to PUT up our hands and THEN if I choose you, you will say it. I also heard someone say house. Is house a sound?

Ls: Noooo

T: It is a? Word

Ls: Word

T: I don't want a word, I just want a sound. Right. Who knows what that SOUND is?

In the above excerpt Ms L and the learners are discussing sound combinations, and Ms L corrects a learner who says the word “house” in response to a question about what sound results from the combination of S and H. She emphasises that this exercise is specifically about sounds and not words. Later on in the same lesson a similar interaction occurs in which Ms L responds “not what. What is a word”. Earlier in the lesson when the learners are going through the alphabet the educator interrupts them to point out that the letter l “can make one word in

itself". Later, in Lesson 12, when learners are writing a test they are required to fill in the missing sounds in words, and Ms L reminds them multiple times that they are only required to write the missing sound and not the entire word.

Another way in which Ms L divides language up into different parts is by categorising these bits of language based on features that they have in common. The notion of word "families" is used often in her lessons. The bits of language that are learned are then often grouped so that, for example, when a new sound is learned the learners are given a list of words containing this new sound. Words are grouped into what Ms L calls families when they have at least one feature in common. For example in Lesson 1 the learners are doing a phonic drill and reading from a list of "O" words - monosyllabic words that all have O as their middle sound. Later in the lesson Ms L asks the learners to identify from within this list of words "any word that belongs to the 'OT' family" and "a word that belongs to the 'og' family".

Understanding how words can be grouped based on common features appears to be valued in Ms L's classroom, as evidenced by the fact that she positively reinforces and repeats to the class when learners are able to identify word "families" on their own. For example in Lesson 5, Ms L repeats a learner contribution to the class: "Right S says that the word, tell me if she's right, she says the word "rash" and the word "cash" belongs to the same family. Is she right?" Similarly in Lesson 7 she says "Right look here, I have some VERY clever children, look at Q what Q said, Q said this one has a puh, and a puh. And that one also has a puh and puh, but the difference is the middle sound you put in will change the word. Okay. So it won't be the same word." Here she is referring to the words "pip" and "pop" - a minimal pair. The learner has noticed that the two words have features - namely their initial and final sounds - in common, and the educator further points out that the difference in the middle sound will result in a new word with a different meaning. In other words, she is pointing out that the middle sounds in the words are phonemes; they distinguish the one word from the other.

This type of exercise seems, much like the phonics approach discussed above, to be geared towards developing learners' phonemic awareness. It is evidently valued in the curriculum as well, since it is set as a question in their test in Lesson 12. Excerpt N below is from the test, in which learners are given a set of words and asked to group them into 'families.'

Excerpt N

T: Okay Grade Ones we have seven words. Let's read them. Man

Ls: Man. Pet

T: Pet

Ls: Cut

T: Cut

Ls: Fan

T: Fan

Ls: Nut

T: Nut

Ls: Pan

T: Pan

Ls: Wet

T: and wet

T: Okay lower your page underneath the table, now you must listen VERY carefully. In the CLOUD, you need to write, the three different families. I DON'T want a whole word. I don't want to see the word pan or pet or cup in the cloud. I ONLY want to see the three different families, okay. Then. UNDERneath it on the little lines, you are going to CHOOSE the words that fit with that family. There will be TWO families that have two words in it. And so they will have an extra line each. With nothing on it. Then there will be one family that has THREE words in it. And it will use ALL THREE lines. Okay. So two of the families will only have two words in it, and one of the families will have three words. So don't worry if you don't have a word on EVERY line. First thing you do is, write the family names in the cloud. And then you choose the words to go underneath it. Right, begin and keep your work covered. No words in the clouds, only families.

Though I have discussed my findings in this section under two headings, all of the teaching practices I have discussed appear to be aligned with the idea that language is a system, and is made up of smaller parts (which in turn are made up of smaller parts, and so on) which

combine in a systematic way; and that language-learning as well as the learning of writing are about learning rules of combination of smaller and larger elements. In my discussion of Ms L's use of phonics I mention her emphasis on fostering phonemic awareness and an understanding of how graphemes relate to phonemes. In this section I also identify examples from the lessons where the phonics method is less successful, and these examples point to a major shortfall of this approach: that it assumes a systematic relationship between graphemes and phonemes. In actuality, and in English especially, there is a more irregular and arbitrary relationship between how the language is written and how it is spoken.

The phonics approach treats reading as simply the decoding of words and sentences. In this approach a learner is said to be able to read if they can identify the relevant phonemes based on the graphemes on a page that are supposed to represent them. This is of course a necessary part of reading - we need to understand how written text and spoken utterances relate to one another - but it is not sufficient. What the phonics approach deprives learners of is a way to read for a particular purpose. Thus learners are taught to mirror the graphemes on a page by saying them aloud in the form of phonemes, but rarely how to read in order to glean meaning from the text (and similarly, how to write in order to create meaning).

Moreover, the phonics approach, which generally involves phonic drills, repetition, and choral response, is unstimulating for learners and does not challenge or inspire learners to read or write for any purpose other than simply for the sake of it. It also often relies on readers - books developed for the purpose of teaching reading - which tend to depict specific and homogenous cultural perspectives that may not be relatable to many of the learners in Ms L's classes. (I discuss this further in Chapter 5.) Ms L does not rely solely on phonics, however, and she does attempt to make up for the shortfalls of the approach by engaging learners more broadly on the aspects of language that she is trying to teach - for example by asking them to draw on prior knowledge when discussing what words mean. However, phonics takes up a large proportion of

her lesson time, resulting in the focus being more on ‘what does this letter sound like?’ than ‘what does this bit of language mean to me, in this context?’

While phonics is about the ability to isolate, distinguish between, and combine phonemes, much of the rest of what Ms L teaches relates to isolating, distinguishing between and combining other bits of language - particularly words and sentences. These teaching practices and the fact that these bits of language are taught in isolation from one another reinforce the idea that language is something which can be analytically taken apart and combined in systematic ways. There is a repeated emphasis on being able to isolate and distinguish between these parts of language, as well as being able to combine them according to specific rules. The use of minimal pairs, for example, also an attempt at fostering phonemic awareness, originally arose out of structuralist linguistics which saw language as a system of interrelated parts.

While there are certainly elements of language which are systematic, and therefore require systematic teaching and learning, it is what is left out by this approach to language and learning that is problematic. Focussing on the purely systematic aspects of language ignores the aspects of language that are social. By approaching language as a socially independent, autonomous system, Ms L is limiting the development of learners – particularly those who are not first language speakers of English. This approach to language fails to adequately acknowledge the linguistic resources that learners already have, and thus limits their potential to augment their learning using these resources. Furthermore, by focussing on the systematic elements of language and how to manipulate these, Ms L ignores the main purpose for which we need language – to make meaning and forge social relations – and thereby denies learners the opportunity to develop their proficiency for this purpose.

In this section I have attempted to show the ways in which Ms L conceptualises language as a system in her teaching practices. While this is not the only way in which she speaks about language, it is certainly a predominant conception. I have based this conclusion on two main

findings: her use of the phonics approach, and her teaching of language in separate and individual parts. Both of these kinds of practices, like the structuralist view of language that they represent, do not reflect the complex and nuanced ways in which people tend to communicate.

4.2. Languages as separate

In analysing Ms L's own language practices as well as the ways in which she talks about language practices generally I noticed that she endeavours to keep individual named languages separate in her lessons. Most of the lessons I observed were aimed towards teaching English, and thus she conducted these lessons solely in English. An exception was made for lesson time allocated for Afrikaans, and in these lessons Ms L moved between English and Afrikaans, using each language for a specific purpose. In this section I discuss how Ms L reinforces a strict demarcation of languages through her own language practices and through her attitude and responses towards the learners' language practices.

Ms L's language practices

Since the official home language and language of learning and teaching of the school is English, many of the lessons I observed were allocated to English, and Ms L conducted these lessons in English. She made an exception for the lessons and activities she designated for Afrikaans, in which she moved between English and Afrikaans, using these various linguistic resources for specific purposes. In short, Ms L uses Afrikaans for Afrikaans teaching and to expose the learners to the language, and she uses English for classroom management and to assist learners in their understanding of the language and content being learned in these classes. In this section I will describe the language practices Ms L engages in during her Afrikaans lessons, focussing on her translanguaging practices and the purposes for which she uses the various linguistic resources at her disposal.

One of the primary reasons that Ms L switches to English during her Afrikaans lessons appears to be for classroom management. In Excerpt O below is an example in Lesson 4 of Ms L self-consciously switching to English to manage the learners' behaviour.

Excerpt O

T: Good. Hands together eyes closed. Right, I know exactly who I'm putting on break detention. Will you please put your hands together and close your eyes. Cause I am talking English now and I know you understand me.

This example is taken from the end of a lesson in which the learners were involved in a short activity requiring them to respond to the educator's instructions (given in Afrikaans) by performing the instructions and repeating to the educator, in Afrikaans, what it is that they are doing. The above excerpt, and particularly Ms L's mention that she is now speaking English (and that therefore the learners should understand her), suggests two important things. It suggests firstly that up until this point many of the learners were not understanding her, and that as a result they were engaging in disruptive behaviour and not taking part in the lesson. It also reveals that Ms L is aware of the linguistic diversity of her classroom - that she feels she must use a lingua franca when she wants more of the class to understand, and, in this case, obey her. Therefore, in this instance she straightforwardly reveals that she uses English when trying to prevent and manage classroom disruptions.

In Lessons 9 and 14 we see similar instances of Ms L using English to manage learner behaviour. In Excerpt P below Ms L uses Afrikaans to give feedback to the learners who responded to her question about the story they are reading. In other words, she is continuing the interaction that she started in Afrikaans in order to further her aim of helping the learners to access and utilise Afrikaans linguistic resources. This excerpt also shows, however, that she feels compelled by disruptive behaviour in the class to move to English in order to control this behaviour.

Excerpt P

T: *Baie goed, die water is vir die diere.* [Very good, the water is for the animals.] Apart from R I don't want to hear any talking. I want to do this lesson nicely. Right, can I just say one thing, listen. We can't learn anything properly, if you boys are not going to settle down. If you cross, stop throwing things. I don't want to HEAR what T is doing. Face the front W. If he wants to crawl around the class, leave him alone. You concentrate. Y I'm struggling with those children, I would like you to sit still. Can you do that for me? Thank you. Remember your promises. I have a handful of children that are doing things that's not right. LEAVE them. *Ons gaan nou die storie lees. Jy maak* [We are going to read the story now. You are making] - you are NOT listening - leave it.

At the end of the above excerpt Ms L attempts to move back into Afrikaans in order to continue the lesson. She signals this to the class by saying “*ons gaan nou die storie lees* [we are going to read the story now]” and by switching back to Afrikaans. When she is interrupted by disruptive behaviour, however, she uses English once again as a tool for classroom management. Similarly, in Lesson 14 she uses English to say “If you do not stop talking, if you do not stop talking and playing with your jacket, you will leave the mat” as a way to quieten a disruptive learner, and follows this with “*Reg, kom ons lees* [Right, let's read]” to steer the lesson back towards Afrikaans.

Sometimes Ms L's switches to English during Afrikaans lessons are for the purpose of directly translating what she has said in Afrikaans into English or vice versa. In Excerpt Q below she explicitly notes that the learners' linguistic repertoires are not equally matched with respect to their access to Afrikaans resources. Nevertheless, she says, perhaps in another act of classroom management, that all of the learners are expected to participate in the activity (at the very least by listening). She then begins to describe and discuss the cover of a large story book that she is holding up for the class to see. She speaks simply and deliberately, and she moves between Afrikaans and English in a patterned, back-and-forth way: in short, she is directly translating each of her sentences.

Excerpt Q

T: Right this morning we going to start. With a little bit of Afrikaans. *Ek wil hê almal moet hierna kyk. Ek gaan vandag 'n nuwe storie vertel.* [I want everyone to look at me. Today I'm going to tell a new story.] I'm going to TELL you a NEW. STORY. SOME of us, understand Afrikaans a LITTLE bit better than others. But we all need to listen. D thank you. *Reg, hande in julle skoot, en ons gaan nou luister en kyk. Hier is 'n prent vol diere* [Right, hands in your lap, and now we are going to listen and look. Here is a picture full of animals.] ((pointing at large story book)) This is a picture with lots of animals. *Hierdie diere, vind ons op 'n PLAAS.* [These animals we find on a farm.] No. These animals we find on a FARM. *Hulle is nie troeteldiere nie.* [They are not pets.] They are not PETS, that we learnt about. These are FARM animals. *Hierdie is PLAAS diere.* [These are farm animals.] *Die naam van ons storie is kyk na die diere. Wat is die naam?* [The name of our story is look at the animals. What is the name?]

In Lesson 14 Ms L similarly says “I'm talking Afrikaans, okay so you must just try and catch on, understand” and then once again proceeds to follow each Afrikaans utterance with an English translation. Later in the same lesson she calls on the learners to help her translate Afrikaans words into English, for example in Excerpt R below.

Excerpt R

T: *Wat GEE die koei vir ons? X die koei gee vir ons MELK. En wat nog?* [What does the cow GIVE us? X the cow gives us MILK. And what else?]

L: Milk!

T: *Ssh. Hy gee vir ons? VLEIS.* [He gives us? MEAT] What do we call *vleis* [meat] in Afri- in English?

Some Ls: MEAT

T: Meat, good.

Many of Ms L's uses of English for translating and aiding learner understanding are thus prefaced with an acknowledgement that not all of the learners have sufficient access to Afrikaans that they can engage in the lessons in an entirely monoglossic way. Nevertheless Ms L

makes earnest attempts at keeping communication in any language other than Afrikaans to a minimum in Afrikaans lessons.

When speaking Afrikaans and engaging with learning materials Ms L speaks slowly and simply, introducing the learners gradually to very simple concepts, and repeats herself often. In both Lessons 9 and 14, Ms L is reading from and discussing an Afrikaans book titled *Kyk na die Diere* [Look at the Animals]. At the beginning of Lesson 9, as I have mentioned, she is discussing the image on the front cover of the book and asking the learners various questions about it. Excerpt S shows how she begins by asking the learners how many animals are pictured on the cover, and in this way introduces the concept of numbers and counting to this lesson.

Excerpt S

T: *Hoe veel diere sien julle op die prent?* [How many animals do you see in the picture?]

L: *Vyf* [five]

T: *Nee. Kom ons tel.* [No. Come let's count]

Ls: *Een, twee, drie, vier, vyf.* [One, two, three, four, five]

T: *Sê drie* [Say three]

Ls: *Drie* [Three]

T: It's not driëe, dit is drie. Kom ons tel weer [It is three ((corrects Afrikaans pronunciation)). Come let's count again]

T with Ls: *Een, twee, DRIE, vier, vyf* [One, two, THREE, four, five]

Later in the lesson she recaps what they have learned: *“Ek gaan (xxx) van die begin. Lees. Kyk na die diere. Daar is een twee drie vier vyf diere. En hulle bly op die plaas. [I'm going to read from the beginning. Look at the animals. There are one two three four five animals. And they live on the farm]”*. From here she continues to speak slowly and in basic terms, reading from the book and adding in her own comments. It could be argued that adding her own voice to the story aids in learner understanding by adding further context to the story and exposing them to more of the language. The story itself involves much repetition: it describes the kinds of sound each farm animal makes, and then says that the animal wants water. For example: *“Die koei sê*

moo moo. Die koei wil water hê. [The cow says moo moo. The cow wants water.]” Similarly Ms L repeats herself in the questions she asks throughout the story. Thus she follows the aforementioned quote with “*Wat sê die koei?* [What does the cow say?]” She also asks such questions as “*Watter soort dier is dit?* [What kind of animal is it?]” and “*Wat wil die hen hê?* [What does the hen want?]” throughout the storytelling process. In this way she is ensuring that the learners are hearing the same words and concepts repeatedly, and are given multiple opportunities to attempt to answer her questions.

The concept of counting is repeated in Lesson 14 when Ms L begins the lesson by asking learners to count to ten forwards and then backwards in Afrikaans. This too is an example of repetition and shows a continuity between lessons, but it also serves as a segue into the learning of how to pluralise nouns in Afrikaans. The following is an excerpt from after the learners have counted to ten.

Excerpt T

T: *Die naam van ons storie is?* [The name of our story is?]

Ls: *Kyk na die diere* [Look at the animals]

T: *Sê, DIERE* [Say, ANIMALS]

Ls: *DIERE* [ANIMALS]

T: *Een dier, TWEE diere.* [One animal, TWO animals]

T with Ls: *Een dier, twee diere. Een dier* [One animal, two animals. One animal]

T: *DRIE* [THREE]

T with Ls: *DierE. Een DIER, vyf dierE. Een dier, ses diere. Een dier, sewe diere.* [Animals. One ANIMAL, five animals. One animal, six animals. One animal, seven animals.]

Other basic concepts covered in these lessons include colours and size. In Excerpt U below Ms L asks a learner to tell her what colour the pictured horse is.

Excerpt U

T: *Reg. Watter KLEUR is die perd? G. Watter kleur is die perd. Kom wys vir my die perd. Umm, J. Kom wys vir my die perd.* [Right. What COLOUR is the horse? G. What colour is the horse? Come and show me the horse. Umm, J. Come and show me the horse.] *Wys [show] means show. Come, come and show me. Good. Thank you. Watter dier is dit graad ene? Dit is 'n perd.* [What animal is it Grade Ones? It is a horse.] Everybody. *Dit is 'n perd.* [It is a horse.] Everybody
Ls: *Dit is 'n perd* [It is a horse]
T: *Watter kleur is die perd? Watter kleur?* [What colour is the horse? What colour?]
Ls: *Bruin* [Brown]

When the learners do not respond it is suggested that they have not understood the question, and Ms L backtracks and instead asks a learner to identify the horse in the picture. This is then followed by a repeat of her original question, which is answered by the learners. She is able to introduce the concept of colours in more basic terms and then continues to ask the same question about the other animals in the story book. In Lesson 14 Ms L again refers back to the concepts learned before, in particular those of counting, plurals, and colours, but then moves on to discuss the concept of size and the words for 'big' and 'small' in Afrikaans. She asks "*Is my koei groot? Of is my koei klein?* [Is my cow big? Or is my cow small?]" and simultaneously uses her hands to make gestures to signal 'big' and 'small'.

I have tried to show in this section the distinct purposes for which Ms L uses her linguistic resources in Afrikaans lessons. It appears that she strives towards the use of Afrikaans only in these lessons, despite her acknowledgement that not all of the learners understand it. She speaks in basic terms, repeats herself often, and focuses on communicating simple concepts in Afrikaans, arguably for the benefit of the learners who have had little exposure to the language. At the same time, however, she engages in translanguaging practices, moving into the use of English occasionally for the purpose of classroom management and aiding learner understanding.

Ms L's attitudes and responses to learners' language practices

As I have mentioned in the above section, there is a discrepancy in the learners' access to Afrikaans resources that Ms L does acknowledge. Reflecting this is also the fact that fewer learners take part in the Afrikaans lessons. In spite of this Ms L places a strong emphasis on sticking to Afrikaans during Afrikaans lessons, and corrects learners who try to contribute to the lessons in any other language.

In Lesson 4 Ms L is performing an activity that is repeated often throughout the classes I observed - though usually in English. As Excerpt V below shows, now that the activity is being performed in Afrikaans, many learners do not understand the instructions implicit in the activity, and Ms must intervene to correct this.

Excerpt V

T: Grade Ones, listen carefully. *Sit jou hande op jou kop. My hande is op my kop* [Put your hands on your head. My hands are on my head]

Ls: *My hande is op my kop* [My hands are on my head]

T: *Sit jou hande onder jou kop.* [Put your hands under your head]

Ls: *Sit jou hande onder jou kop.* [Put your hands under your head]

T: *Waar is jou hande? My hande is?* [Where are your hands? My hands are?]

Some Ls: *Onder my kop* [Under my head]

It appears in the above excerpt that the learners are simply repeating after the educator ("*Sit jou hande onder jou kop* [Put your hands under your head]") rather than responding in the way she would like them to ("*My hande is onder my kop* [My hands are under my head]"). Ms L tries to correct this but still elicits little participation from the learners, and notes "I sound like I'm the ONLY one saying it."

This example is similar to those mentioned above, where Ms L acknowledges that not everyone in the class understands Afrikaans well, and where she tells learners to continue paying

attention despite this drawback. Similarly, in Lesson 9, in an act of classroom management conducted in English, she says to a learner “you NEED Afrikaans lessons, so you need to be here,” and threatens “if you don’t want to come my darling you can stay there, but I AM going to inform daddy hey”.

The Afrikaans lessons I observed were also replete with examples of the educator correcting learners who participate in class discussions using English instead of Afrikaans. In Excerpt W below, Ms L praises a learner for responding with the correct answer but follows this with a request for the answer in Afrikaans. Similarly, Ms L responds positively to learner contributions but continually requests that the learners respond in Afrikaans. In Lesson 14 she does not acknowledge a learner’s response as correct, saying “You can’t say a cow. *Ons praat Afrikaans. Wat sê ons in Afrikaans?* [We’re speaking Afrikaans. What do we say in Afrikaans?]” and thereby silences a learner for using English.

Excerpt W

T: *Reg. Hierdie man, hy dra iets, hy dra iets. Weet iemand wat hy dra? Ja, hy dra water. En die water is IN wat?* [Right. This man, he is carrying something, he’s carrying something. Does anyone know what he’s carrying? Yes, he’s carrying water. And the water is IN what?]

L: bucket

T: Very good but that is the English word. So (xxx) Afrikaans yes?

L: *emmer* [bucket]

T: *'n EMMER baie goed.*

In Excerpt X below Ms L also regulates her own language practices in the classroom, noticing when she has been using English and signalling a conscious switch back to Afrikaans.

Excerpt X

T: It’s the same in the animal kingdom. Okay. A bull can’t give milk. But a COW can so these are FEMALES. Right. Okay so let’s just quickly turn over. *Ons sal meer Afrikaans*

praat [We're going to talk more Afrikaans]. *Die bok sê, meh, meh. Die bok wil water hê*
[The goat says, meh, meh. The goat wants water.]

Ms L reinforces an ideology of languages as separate entities by regulating her own language practices as well as those of her learners in an attempt to keep the use of separate named languages limited to particular domains. Since she is teaching in an English-medium school, she relies solely on her English linguistic resources for most of her lessons. In the lessons designated for the learning of Afrikaans (officially the First Additional Language at this school), Ms L tries hard to keep communication in Afrikaans. She does, however, engage in translanguaging practices, moving between Afrikaans and English for various purposes. As I have shown, she does this self-consciously and for the most part for very specific reasons - classroom management and translation. Ms L is aware that the learners in her class are linguistically diverse, and her translanguaging practices suggest that she is also aware that a monoglossic approach to teaching and learning is not suitable for all of the learners. At the same time, however, she limits translanguaging opportunities for the learners, insisting that they use only Afrikaans during Afrikaans lessons despite the value that contributions in other languages might bring to the lessons. A contradiction therefore exists in Ms L's practices and attitudes: her practices suggest that she sees the value in a heteroglossic approach, but at the same time she wants to limit the learners' use of multiple linguistic resources.

4.3. Language as a skill

The idea that language is a skill, or rather a finite set of skills, that can be learned, applied and measured is another subtle way in which Ms L conceptualises language in her teaching practices, perhaps best encapsulated by her call to learners to "show me if you are clever". This conception of language sees it in terms of proficiency or competence and in this way divides language users into those who can be said to 'have' (a named) language, and those that do not. In this section I discuss the ways in which Ms L reinforces this conception of language. Much of the evidence for my claim that she conceptualises language in this way overlaps with the

evidence I have discussed in the other sections of this chapter. I will therefore begin by briefly discussing where these overlaps occur. I will then discuss in more detail the evidence that I have not yet covered, and which can more strongly support my argument that Ms L conceptualises language as primarily a set of skills to be learnt, that involves combining discrete bits into more complex structures, rather than a more mobile and purposeful practice that involves combining forms and meanings in distinct ways that may vary across social contexts.

In my section on language as a system I note how Ms L teaches learners to isolate, break down and recombine individual parts of language, for example through her use of phonic drills and exercises requiring learners to identify individual parts of words and sentences. This approach therefore attempts to break language down into learnable parts and foster an understanding in learners about how these parts relate to one another systematically. It suggests that language is a finite, concrete whole, such that once a certain proportion of that whole is learned, one can be said to be 'proficient.'

When Ms L conceptualises languages as separate bounded entities by enforcing a strict demarcation between named languages, she is similarly reinforcing the idea that languages are finite - that one can identify where it is that one language ends and another begins. In creating sharp distinctions between languages Ms L is ensuring that learners develop their skills in each language separately - rather than fostering a development of learners' linguistic or communicative resources generally. Furthermore, when she notes that some learners are deficient in particular (Afrikaans) linguistic resources, she enforces a division between those that 'know' or are 'proficient' in a given language, and those who are not.

The emphasis on testing

While much of what I have discussed in previous sections, and briefly outlined again above, is consistent with Ms L's conceptualising of language as a set of skills, another aspect of her teaching practices solidifies this: her emphasis on testing and test preparation as a reason for

learning. I must of course reiterate here that Ms L is working within a system that calls for these kinds of teaching practices. The education system in South Africa requires testing (and therefore itself conceptualises language as a measurable skill), and moreover the period when I was collecting data was immediately before the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) testing exercises, when all schools are required to administer standard tests that are centrally designed and distributed by the government's Department of Basic Education. Ms L is therefore not entirely autonomous or responsible for her conceptualisation of language in this way, but she does nevertheless frame language in problematic ways, which I will illustrate and discuss below.

A primary way in which Ms L conceptualises language in terms of proficiency and skill is through her emphasis on testing. Many of the lessons I observed were aimed, explicitly or subtly, at preparing learners for being tested. There are various ways in which she does this: by explicitly telling learners that they are learning because they are going to be tested, by teaching learners strategies for answering test questions, and through repetition, drills, and an emphasis on memorising and recalling words or concepts.

In Lessons 2 and 3 Ms L is preparing the learners to answer comprehension questions based on a story. In Excerpt Y below, we see that she begins the lesson by telling learners that there is a set of words (question words) that they need to 'remember' because these words will be used in the questions that follow the story she is about to read them. A salient feature to recognise in this interaction is that she introduces these question words before beginning the story, and in this way prioritises the comprehension questions over the story, or the practice of reading, itself. Moreover, her use and repetition of the word "remember" in relation to the question words indicates the importance she places on the learners being able to memorise words rather than understanding the language as a whole. Ms L enacts this view in Lesson 3, which occurs after the story has been read in Lesson 2, when she instructs the learners to read out the list of question words repeatedly. Similarly in Lesson 8, in which Ms L is sitting with a smaller group of learners doing reading practice, she instructs the learners to re-read something which

they had read in a previous lesson, because some of the learners “seem to have forgotten some of the previous words”. Her emphasis on memorising as a strategy for learning language suggests that there is a finite number of words that one can and must learn (or more accurately in this case, learn to decode from text) before they are considered proficient.

Excerpt Y

T: Would you like, would you like another story

Ls: YES miss

T: Now in this story, it is - no sorry - in the story there are certain things that happen. And I am going to ask you questions about the story, and I want you to remember these words ((writes words on board)). Right, these are the words I want you to remember and they are question words. Grade Ones I can't go on if you don't stop talking. Put your hands in your lap. Right these are the question words that I'm going to ask. The one word is 'how'. Say it

Ls: How

T: The other question word is what. What is the question word?

Ls: What

T: The third question word is WHO. What is it?

Ls: Who

T: ((pointing to words))

T with Ls: how, what and who

T: The fourth question word is

Ls: When

T with Ls: How, what, who, and when.

T: And the last question word that we going to have today, is why. What is the question word?

Ls: Why

T: Now this is what we going to do. I am going to ask some of the questions. G will you stop it now. And then YOU are also going to ask one or two questions. And we going to decide which question you going to ask. Whether it's a "how" question, a "what" question, a "who", a "when", or a "why". And why do we do this? Because in our tests, and even in our ANAs test, you going to get a little story, okay? And we are going to ask you questions. So you need to know how to listen, to find the answers, okay. So before we start I just want to say H I'm aware of you, the noise you making, sit. Um I am aware of you two boys at the back there, I'm aware of C, and D, that means I know what you

doing, I'm watching you. Right. This book is part of a series, we read the one, Lazy Lion, and the next one we going to read today.

In Excerpt Y above we also are exposed to the first of many instances in which Ms L justifies her teaching of particular things to the learners by saying it is going to be tested. While it is entirely fair to prepare learners for being tested, Ms L explicitly frames being tested as a primary reason for learning in the first place: “Why do we do this? Because in our tests...” She also once again neglects to mention the many reasons why people read, and why the learners might find value in listening to or reading the story, opting rather to encourage the learners to listen so that they can “find the answers” to the test questions.

In Lesson 12 the skills that Ms L had attempted to teach the learners in Lessons 2 and 3 are tested. Again Ms L places an emphasis on test-answering strategies rather than understanding. In Excerpt Z below Ms L and the learners have read through a short story and Ms L is now walking the learners through each comprehension question (which they are to answer individually on their test papers) based on the story. Ms L is walking around the classroom repeatedly instructing the learners to answer the question (which requires learners to complete a sentence beginning “the children”) by telling them to find the related words in the story and copy them onto the line in their test papers. The strategy she is suggesting they use is therefore less about engaging with the question and the story to understand what is being communicated, and more about searching for similar words in the provided story and rewriting them on their tests.

Excerpt Z

T: Right, now, here, they want to know what happened to the children. They STARTED the sentence can you see the dotted line? Now it says THE children and you must go on, writing what happened to them. You can LOOK at the story, to find the WORDS you need to write. What HAPPENED to the CHILDREN. Go back to the STORY and look to see what happened to them and you WRITE THE WORDS ON THE LINE. What HAPPENED to

the childrens. Then look for the answer and write it there. (xxx) Excuse me? No talking. Did you write the words in? The children, what happened to them you look for the answer in the story. DON'T write the children again. Just say what happened to them. They've already written the children. Excuse me F, sit down. Come sit here where I can see you. Sssh. I want NO talking. Cover your work hey H, did you write. The children what, what happened to them? Find out in the story. Copy it onto your page. There we go. That's very good, um. Face down. You done? Put down your head. Um I'm not happy with those two girls whose heads are together? What happened to the children? In the story. Now find the words there, and write those words. What is happening at this table? Silence. Yes. The children, you don't need to start the sentence. I am SO proud of you. Cover your work put down your head. The children, what happened to them. Find it there, and copy it on. Think what happened to them, find the words, and copy it onto the? sentence. I mean sorry onto the line. Right we going to go on. No talking, right. Went to - what happened to the children in the story? Who is talking?

Ls: J!

T: And you know why he's talking cause ALL of you, have your head up. Put your head down, and cover your work. No talking. Don't look at his work. Go on. Find the words there.

Similarly, later on in the same test, when learners are asked to write the initial sound of a word, Ms L tells a learner to “copy it properly”. The way that Ms L attempts to prepare learners for writing a test is therefore mirrored during the actual test, in which she suggests learners use the same memorise-recall-copy method for answering test questions. When learners show a difficulty in answering test questions she notes “It's AMAZING what children do you learn ONE thing in class and you do something TOTALLY different in the test. Think WHAT we do in class”. In Lessons 5 and 6 Ms L once again reminds the learners that the reason they are learning the (bits of) language is because they are going to be tested. In Lesson 5, in which the learners are to do a phonic drill in order to learn about individual sounds, Ms L tells the learners that one of the reasons for this activity is so that they are able to identify the initial sounds in words during tests. As seen in Excerpt AA below, she also uses this opportunity to teach the learners the meaning of “initial”, since this is a word that comes up in test questions. (In Lesson 10, in which the learners are completing individual worksheets, Ms L once again reminds them of the meaning of this word.)

Excerpt AA

T: The second thing is (.) in our test in our ANAs test, and even in OUR test, there will be a chance where you are going to be asked. Look. At. Me. C leave that now. You will be asked to write down the first, or here's a different word. Look at me, I'm not going to say another word until every eye is on me. Initial. The initial sound of a word. D when someone asks you for the initial sound of a word it means the first sound in the word, okay. So sometimes children get confused, because, suddenly in a test they say write down, they give you a picture, and they say write down the initial sound of the word. And they think ah! What is that! Okay it means the first sound. So what is my picture?

Later in Lesson 5 Ms L reminds the learners that they are preparing for a test, and also tells them what it is that they are *not* required to know for the test: “So today in our in our test remember we learning our things our work for our test, and in our test, our ANAs test, they sometimes give you double sounds that, although you don't have to write the word, you need to know what they are, okay?”. She reminds them, similarly, that they are only required to know how to write the three-letter (consonant-vowel-consonant) words for their test.

Lesson 6 is also dedicated to test preparation, as Ms L points out early on: “Now you must watch carefully because in your tests, in the ANAs test, this is what they going to do”. She then goes on to teach the learners a strategy for reordering muddled words into a coherent sentence. I have discussed the strategy she uses here in more detail in section 4.1., but I would like to point out here how she frames this strategy as something which can be used in a test even if one does not understand the language. See for example Excerpt BB below.

Excerpt BB

T: Great! So I KNOW that this one, because it's the ONLY word with a capital letter. Ah come on we not fighting. It's the only one with a capital letter so I'm going to put that one first. Now. Listen. Let's look for another clue. Even if I can't READ I can know what the LAST word will be. What clue will tell me what the last word must be? What clue? C doesn't want to think. And D doesn't want to think. What will give me a clue to what the last word is? I don't want a word I want to know the clue. Yes E

E: (xxx)

T: The one that has the FULL STOP. Which one has the full stop?

L: Fast! Fast!

T: Fast, good. Right. So Grade Ones, even if I can't read, if I know my capital letters, and I know what a full stop looks like, I know which words are first and last.

In the above excerpt, Ms L is revising the strategy she has just shown the learners for placing words in the correct order to form a sentence. Instead of fostering an understanding of how to make sense using English linguistic resources, Ms L chooses to frame the activity in terms of how to successfully answer a test question. Thus she says that “even if [a learner] can’t read” they can achieve a certain level of success in a test (and thereby be considered to a certain extent ‘proficient’) by being able to identify a capital letter and a full stop. Ms L once again encourages learners to use this strategy in Lesson 10, before learners are to complete individual written work, thereby confirming her belief in this strategy as efficient.

In Lesson 13, Ms L once again prepares learners for being tested, and also once again frames being tested as a primary reason for learning. The lesson is about verbs and their past tense forms, and before doing a drill of a list of words in their present and past tense forms, Ms L poses the question “Now WHY are we doing this?” to the class. Excerpt CC below shows her answer to the question.

Excerpt CC

T: There we go. In your TEST (.) Right. So. In your test, they will give you a sentence, with an action word, okay. And then they will ask you, to do the SAME sentence, but say what happened YESTERDAY. And then you will have to FILL in your word of the PAST, that same action that happened in the past. So that’s why I’m going to give you for your flip file a page that looks like this. And I WANT you to read, and practice to write, your words. We don’t KNOW what word they’ll give you, but it will most PROBABLY be, one where you just change, by adding the duh. Okay. So we quickly gonna go through it now. And then I will give it to you later. Right all together

T with Ls: Today I walk, yesterday I walked

The above excerpt not only shows how Ms L once again frames the activity in terms of test preparation, but also illustrates how she further attempts to prepare the learners for the test by reassuring them that only the past tense form of regular verbs are likely to be tested. Similarly, in the same lesson, she reminds the learners about writing conventions, framing them in terms of test grading, by saying “Grade Ones, if YOU don’t put in that LITTLE full stop, you going to LOSE one, two, three marks. For every full stop you leave out. You MUST put it in”.

In this section I have shown how Ms L conceptualises language as a finite measurable skill through both her teaching and language practices discussed in previous sections, as well as her emphasis on testing and test preparation. While I do acknowledge that Ms L is constrained by the system in which she is working, which requires her to produce particular results, I have tried to show that she frames language in unnecessarily narrow ways. I should emphasise here that I am not arguing against test preparation itself - indeed it is entirely necessary within a system that places such import on standardised testing. Rather I am arguing that her framing in these lessons of language in terms of test preparation presents a problematic conception of language. By focussing on test preparation, and repeatedly and overtly framing testing as a reason for learning, Ms L is implying that language is about demonstrating your ability to answer test questions. In other words, rather than helping learners to develop the range of linguistic resources they will need for various communicative purposes, she is conceptualising language as a finite, measurable entity that can differentiate between ‘proficient’ and ‘non-proficient’ users.

5. Discussion: the acceptance and propagation of Standard Language Ideology

In my literature review I discuss language ideology, defined broadly as a set of beliefs about language and language users. The most prominent set of beliefs that is evident in Ms L's teaching practices is what has come to be known as Standard Language Ideology (SLI). SLI is defined by Lippi-Green (1997: 64) as

a bias toward an abstract, idealised, homogeneous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class.

This chapter will serve as a discussion chapter, drawing together my findings and showing how these point to a standard language ideology in Ms L's teaching practices. I will first unpack the definition of SLI and all of the aspects or viewpoints that constitute it. I will then discuss my findings in light of this, and show how Ms L's conceptualisation of language as a system, as a measurable skill, and languages as separable objects, works to reinforce and propagate a standard language ideology.

In order to understand the type of bias involved in SLI, it is necessary to understand what is meant by 'standard language.' Lippi-Green (1997: 64) calls this language "abstract, idealised, [and] homogenous" meaning that it exists mainly as an ideal rather than a concrete reality, and it corresponds with a set of non-varying forms (in other words, SLI is also a bias *against* variation in language). Davila (2016: 128) similarly calls this language "identifiable and stable" - in other words uniform and non-changing - but instead of referring to SLI as a bias toward this type of language, she says it is a "belief in" its very existence. Lippi-Green (1997) similarly calls standard language an abstraction - that is, not something that exists in actuality but rather an

ideal towards which we aspire. Davila's calling into question the existence and identifiability of standard language (and Lippi-Green's use of the terms "abstract" and "idealised") corresponds with the general consensus in linguistics that variation exists in all languages and thus there is no such thing as a single uniform language variety.

In order to have something to point to as the ideal, a standard language is generally, as Lippi-Green (1997) notes, based upon written language. However since in practice spoken communication seldom mirrors written communication, it is usually the language of the socially, politically, and economically more powerful group that is identified as the standard. This is the crucial point about standard language ideology: it is not only a belief in a homogenous idealised language, it is a bias towards the language spoken by the powerful and privileged (and thus a bias against the language of the marginalised).

Moreover, this standard language, as is evident in the word 'standard,' is seen as value neutral and believed to be accepted by and accessible to the majority (Davila, 2016). The standard language is therefore conceived from a position of privilege, seeing its own means of communication as normal, neutral, the standard, and others as other, different, and deviating from the standard.

In what ways then does Ms L propagate a standard language ideology? Before answering this question I must note the ways in which the education system generally propagates a standard language ideology. I have discussed in my literature review the ways in which language in education policy in South Africa conceptualises languages: as, among other things, identifiable, distinguishable objects removed from their contexts of use. This is in line with SLI which sees the standard language variety as ideal, homogenous, neutral (separated from its context of power). Moreover, the goal of education with respect to language, as Lippi-Green (1997) notes, is to provide learners with access to the standard language. It is therefore the job of the educator to teach the standard varieties (in this case, of English and Afrikaans), but teaching

learners how to use the standard language must be distinguished from teaching them to accept a standard language ideology.

The enduring belief in SLI by educators is transferred into their teaching practices, usually by positing the rules surrounding the standard as absolute, controlling the language varieties learners are allowed to use, and thereby delegitimising non-standard and marginalised varieties (Lippi-Green, 1997). This is usually justified by saying that other institutions in which learners will find themselves in the future (universities, businesses, government) require and expect proficiency in the standard language, but this justification fails to recognise that these institutions are made up of former learners who learned to accept, support, and later propagate SLI (Lippi-Green, 1997). Educators' support of SLI is therefore problematic for two main reasons. First, it is a symbolic gesture that teaches learners that their home languages are less valuable and less useful. Second, the acceptance of SLI is modelled by educators in their language and teaching practices, and is therefore propagated through the learners who themselves go on to become educators, employers, public servants, and so on. The following quote from Lippi-Green (1997: 132) sums up this point powerfully:

What our schools do, for the most part, is to insist that some children forego the expressive power and consolation of speech in that variety of English which is the currency of their home communities. This gesture of denial and symbolic subordination is projected as a first and necessary step to becoming a good student and a good citizen.

In my findings chapter I note that that one of the ways in which Ms L conceptualises language is as a system of smaller parts which can be analytically broken down and combined in a systematic way. This is evident in the way that she teaches language, in particular her use of the phonics approach, and the ways that she speaks about language (use) and thereby teaches the learners to think about language. The use of the phonics approach to teaching and learning reading assumes a certain level of internal consistency and stability in the language being

taught. Assuming that language can be analytically broken down requires that you assume that it is stable.

I have called into question the effectiveness of the phonics approach and shown where it has been problematic in Ms L's classroom: for example, when Ms L tells learners that the word 'shoe' cannot be sounded out and needs to be read as a whole word. In the case of this example, the problem arises because the relationship between phonemes and graphemes is not systematic or consistent in English (even so-called standard English). In other words, the language is in many ways far from ideal.

There are other more insidious examples I illuminate of how the phonics approach fails, namely the issues that arise with accents. When the phonics approach is used in a way that only allows preferred or so-called 'neutral' pronunciations, this points to an assumption of the standard variety itself as neutral. It also highlights the ways in which this standard is imposed by those with more power and is assumed to be homogenous. When Ms L uses the phonics approach to 'correct' pronunciation, she delegitimises non-standard forms and also models a particular way of thinking and talking about language: that the standard (White South African English) accent is both correct and inevitable.

I have also mentioned, although not discussed in very much detail, the use of readers for teaching reading. These depict limited cultural perspectives and further perpetuate the idea that reading is more a matter of decoding graphemes than gleaning meaning. We therefore see two main ways in which Ms L's treatment of language as a system perpetuates SLI: firstly, in its assumption of an idealised, stable, homogenous language, and secondly, in its framing of this language as neutral, inevitable, and the only correct variety.

Analysis of the Afrikaans FAL lessons allowed me to get a clearer idea of Ms L's attitude towards languages and speakers. As I have noted, the variety of language taught and learned in school is

generally what is taken to be the standard variety, and so we see in both English and Afrikaans lessons the assumption that this standard is the only correct variety. Ms L insists on keeping these languages separate, and in order to do so she must believe they are separable. Therefore, a crucial aspect of the standard varieties that is evident here is the assumption that they are identifiable, that we can identify what counts as each language, which is an assumption consistent with both SLI and the conception of language as an object.

SLI is a bias towards a single correct homogenous language variety and is thus a rejection of variation in language. By extension, then, Ms L's rejection of translanguaging practices by learners is an extension of this SLI. (If SLI rejects variation it must also reject translanguaging, even between standard varieties, since this would be a practice that involves the 'improper' use of both languages.) This is a reflection of the policies and discourses that tend to talk about multilingualism as a problem rather than a resource. Ms L rejects and attempts to correct the deployment of multiple linguistic resources even if it could be helpful - in particular, for example, for immigrant learners who have had little to no access or exposure to Afrikaans. This is despite Ms L's own engagement in these practices. A tension therefore exists: while translanguaging is helpful, it is incompatible with the monoglossic ideologies that are deeply ingrained in the system. Ms L knows that some learners have trouble understanding and using Afrikaans, hence her use of English for classroom management (self-consciously, as we see her point out to a learner that she knows he understands her now that she is speaking English and translation. At the same time, however, policy, curriculum, assessment, commonsense ideology and the ideas about language that have likely been ingrained in her mind from a young age, all work against this.

One important constraining factor in how Ms L is able to talk about language is the ways in which she is required to assess language learning. I discuss in my findings chapter how Ms L frames language as a skill, as something that one either does or does not have, by placing emphasis on testing as a reason for learning. I note how this emphasis ignores the myriad

purposes for which we do in fact use languages, and does little to prepare learners for these purposes. I also show the links between Ms L's conceptions of language as a skill and as separate systems. These ways in which Ms L teaches and assesses languages - as separate entities, and as stable, consistent systems - also require that she supports SLI. Assessing language use means distinguishing between learners who are sufficiently competent users and those who are not. This level of competence is measured according to an idealised standard variety, the variety that is posited as most correct. Presenting language as a set of measurable skills means assuming that the given standard language is a stable, identifiable, neutral, and moreover desirable language. In reality, language use is never value neutral, and someone - someone with power - must decide what language skills are worth having, and what is worth testing (that is, what counts as proficiency). However presenting this desirable standard as neutral and inevitable forestalls questions around what is worth learning. If this is simply the way it is (or as Ms L says, "this is what English is like"), and X, Y, and Z are the skills required to be considered proficient in idealised standard language A, then X, Y, and Z are what need to be tested.

I have attempted in this discussion chapter to show how Ms L's conceptions of language contribute towards, and are evidence of, a standard language ideology. I would like to conclude by briefly considering the effects that these conceptualisations of language might have for learners. At the beginning of this chapter I discuss how Lippi-Green (1997) problematises SLI in education, and the problems she points out certainly apply in this case. Ms L's framing of the standard as neutral and inevitable will likely propagate this idea. Her framing of some types of language practices as more correct and worth learning will likely marginalise some learners. Many of the learners at South Star Primary School are already linguistically marginalised because the LoLT is not their home language. The linguistic resources they are able to draw on when learning are already diminished by this fact. They are diminished further when learners are limited to the standard variety, monoglossic practices, exposed to inaccurate conceptions of language as an autonomous entity, and pressured to display their linguistic proficiency in

assessments. This is likely to impact negatively upon learners' ability to acquire linguistic resources and thereby the ideals of fostering multilingualism that the South African Constitution and language policies call for. Inaccurate conceptions of what language is, and ideas about language use that assume translanguaging is a problem, both work towards stunting the opportunities for learning that learners might otherwise have. Limiting the resources that learners are allowed to draw upon will have an effect on both language and content learning. As Lippi-Green (1997: 132) points out, however, school is not only for learning language and content, it is also for learning how to become a "good citizen". Devaluing certain language practices is a symbolic gesture that tells learners that their ways of being in the world are less valuable, and less desirable.

6. Conclusion

My aim at the outset of this research project was to provide a description of the ideas about language at play in the small-scale setting of Ms L's Grade One classroom at South Star Primary School. Given the context of unequal access to quality education and what we know about how this relates to language (in particular, the LoLT being inaccessible to most learners, and the inaccurate conceptions of language evident in language policy), it seemed that it would be necessary and interesting to examine what conceptions of language look like in a Grade One classroom, in a school that is in many relevant ways similar to many other ex-Model C South African schools directed at children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, where educators often prefer to speak English only and the students come from diverse home language backgrounds.

Having been educated in the South African system myself (although at far better-resourced public schools), I was not entirely surprised at the ways in which language was taught and spoken about: these were very much in line with the notions of language I had been exposed to from an early age. These similarities do, of course, point to the ways in which Ms L is constrained by the curriculum and the prescribed methods of teaching language and literacy. As the first section of my findings chapter shows, learners are taught language in a systematic fashion. Reading is first and foremost a matter of decoding, of deconstructing language into its parts (words, letters, sounds), and writing is a matter of reconstructing these parts. These parts of language are learned about as separate from one another and existing in a hierarchy: sounds or letters, then words, then sentences. The conception of language that Ms L is teaching is therefore one that sees language as a system of individual parts that can be analytically broken down and reconstructed.

The ways in which Ms L seems to conceptualise languages is similarly segregationist: languages for her are very much separate, distinguishable things which must be kept as such. In the

second section of my findings chapter I show how Ms L attempts to keep use of different named languages separate in her lessons: Afrikaans only during Afrikaans lessons, English the rest of the time. There are many instances where I show her attempting to control the languages being spoken by learners. While most of the learners are not home-language English speakers, for many of them - the learners whose families have migrated from other African countries - Afrikaans is even less familiar. I saw these learners struggling in Afrikaans lessons, where any attempts at using English to make sense of what was being learned were shut down by the educator. At other times Ms L was sensitive to these discrepancies in linguistic repertoires, and would move between Afrikaans and English as a way to translate what was being said. I noted a contradiction in the way that she blocked any attempts at translanguaging by the learners, while engaging in the practice herself. That said, most of Ms L's use of non-Afrikaans resources during Afrikaans lessons were for very specific, identifiable purposes (usually translation and classroom management), so she certainly attempted to keep these languages separate as far as possible.

The third major way in which Ms L conceptualises language is as a measurable skill. Her attempts at dividing language up into individual learnable parts, and her insistence on teaching and using different languages in isolation from one another, both point to her attempts to present language as a finite set of skills that one either has or does not have. Most notable, however, is her emphasis on testing, particularly the way she frames it as a primary reason for learning language. While test preparation is necessary in this context (where learners are expected to write standardised tests), Ms L does place disproportionate emphasis on preparing learners for writing language tests. In this way she frames language as a means to an end - the end being producing adequate results - rather than as a set of resources for making meaning, forging social relationships, and performing other communicative functions.

The main themes that I identified and outlined in my findings point broadly to a conception of language that is in line with that relied upon in language in education policy: language as an

autonomous entity, and languages as identifiable, distinguishable objects. This conception of language is problematised in my literature review, where I note how it is in tension with policy claims about aiming to promote multilingualism and mother tongue education. In line with this observation, I showed in Chapter 5 how the three main ways in which Ms L conceptualises language are problematic for similar reasons. Using the concept of Standard Language Ideology I discussed the commonalities between these themes. I showed how they contribute to an ideology that reinforces the monoglossic status quo, and delegitimises and others already less-valued languaging practices. I note moreover that the danger of this ideology is in how it presents itself as natural and commonsense. In this way the ideology is propagated so that learners will continue to accept and support it in other aspects of their lives, thereby propagating it further.

Before I move onto my final section, I wish to make two disclaimers. First, I acknowledge the small scale of my study. While I collected adequate data to inform a discussion that will suffice for a minor dissertation, I only collected data from one classroom, and analysed the practices of one educator. I have tried to make this clear at the beginning of, and throughout, this dissertation. This has therefore been an in-depth exploration of one educator's language and teaching practices and what I have argued to be the ways that she has conceptualised language. Using the data collected, and the literature I have read, I have made arguments about what these conceptions of language might mean, and what their implications might be for the learners.

Second, I do not wish my conclusions to be taken as a condemnation of Ms L herself. There are many aspects of her context over which she has little control. She is constrained by the curriculum which prescribes what content she must teach, how to assess the learners, and how to allocate time. Furthermore, she has a limited amount of time in which to teach this content, and much of her time is taken up by classroom management. She is also under pressure to produce test results that show her learners are making adequate progress, and so needs to

ensure that her learners know how to answer test questions. Moreover, if we consider Ms L's broader context, standard language ideology and a segregationist conception of language are thoroughly normalised and widely accepted. With this in mind, it is difficult to view Ms L's propagation of these ideas as anything other than well-intentioned. That said, they are still problematic, which leads me to the recommendations I would make for future research.

Recommendations for further research

I have noted the small scale of my study. The research I have conducted and presented here should therefore mainly be used as a starting point for future research. The literature, concepts, and methods I have used, and the arguments I have made, could be used to inform more or larger-scale studies. For instance, educators' conceptions of language could be compared across classes, Grades, and schools. It would also be useful to integrate different types of data. One important way in which my research is limited is that I have relied upon one main data source - classroom recordings (alongside field notes and informal discussions with educators). Interviews or focus groups with educators would provide more, richer data, since educators could be asked more directly about how they understand the concept of language. Other research could also integrate the attitudes and beliefs of learners, and how they experience the teaching practices of educators who conceptualise language in varying ways. Due to the quality of my recordings and the size of the class I was observing, I was unable to pick up each individual learner's utterance. Better quality recording equipment would allow for closer analysis of the learners' responses. Learners could also be allowed to speak more directly in interviews or focus groups, or perhaps through creative assignments. Finally, since as I have noted the ways in which language(s) and speakers are represented can have a profound effect on learners and how they learn, it would be useful to see studies that involve introducing some kind of intervention (alternative teaching methods or extra-curricular programs that present alternate views of language) and measuring the effects of this intervention.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent form for learners' parents

University of Cape Town

School of Education

Consent form

1. Information

Principal researcher: Emma-Kate Rowley

Title of research project: What counts as language? The ways in which language is conceptualised in the teaching practices of two grade 1 teachers.

I am a master's student at the University of Cape Town, in the School of Education. I am planning to conduct research which your child is invited to take part in. This form will describe the kind of research I plan to do, and what will be involved for your child if you choose to participate.

Nature of the [redacted]

I plan to [redacted] are saying about language, and how they use language in the classroom, in order to see at how they conceptualise language. In other words, I am simply looking at what teachers think and say language is.

In order to do this, I would like to sit in on language lessons and record them using a video recorder. I would like to do this every school day for three weeks.

What is involved for participants:

Your child will not be asked to do anything differently, as I would like to capture classroom practices as they naturally happen. The lessons should continue as usual, while I record them.

Risks:

To the best of my knowledge, your child will not be put in any kind of risk by participating in this study. Participating in this research will not involve any kind of (physical, mental, or emotional) harm to your child.

Benefits:

Your child will not benefit directly from participating in this research. You will not be remunerated for participating in this research. It is possible that this research could create new knowledge, which could potentially help others in the future.

Your rights as a participant:

The results of this research will be used in my master's dissertation, and may be published. However, the names of and any identifying details about all participants will be kept confidential.

You may choose to stop participating in this research at any time.

Where to contact me:

Department address: School of Education, Neville Alexander Building, UCT Upper Campus, University Road.

Telephone: 0798084438

Email: emmakaterowley@gmail.com

Appendix 2: Consent form for educators

University of Cape Town

School of Education

Consent form

1. Information

Principal researcher: Emma-Kate Rowley

Title of research project: What counts as language? The ways in which language is conceptualised in the teaching practices of two grade 1 teachers.

I am a master's student at the University of Cape Town, in the School of Education. I am planning to conduct research which you are invited to take part in. This form will describe the kind of research I plan to do, and what will be involved for you if you choose to participate.

Nature of the research:

I plan to investigate what it is that teachers are saying about language, and how they use language in the classroom, in order to get at how they conceptualise language. In other words, I am simply looking at what teachers think and say language *is*.

In order to do this, I would like to sit in on language lessons and record them using a video recorder. I would like to do this every school day for one week in each classroom.

What is involved for participants:

You will not be asked to do anything differently, as I would like to capture classroom practices as they naturally happen. You will need to continue the lessons as usual, while allowing me to record them.

Risks:

To the best of my knowledge, you will not be put in any kind of risk by participating in this study. Participating in this research will not involve any kind of (physical, mental, or emotional) harm to you.

Benefits:

You will not benefit directly from participating in this research. You will not be remunerated for participating in this research. It is possible that this research could create new knowledge, which could potentially help others in the future.

Your rights as a participant:

The results of this research will be used in my master's dissertation, and may be published. However, the names of and any identifying details about all participants will be kept confidential.

You may choose to stop participating in this research at any time.

Where to contact me:

Department address: School of Education, Neville Alexander Building, UCT Upper Campus, University Road.

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]