

A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town.

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of :

Master of Education

Applied Language & Literacy Studies

Supervisor: Emeritus Associate Professor Rochelle Kapp University
of Cape Town

2022

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Abstract

This qualitative case study focusses on the experiences and challenges of multilingual learners when writing monolingual assessments. It draws on a growing body of post-structuralist theory on linguistic repertoire and translanguaging in order to understand how grade 6 multilingual learners engaged with monolingual assessments in a working-class school in the Western Cape where English is the language of learning and teaching for all learners except those for whom Afrikaans is a home language. Using ethnographic methods, I focused on 3 grade 6 classrooms and observed 46 lessons over a period of 8 weeks. In addition, I collected assessment transcripts, learners' notebooks and conducted interviews with 14 learners and their teachers. The data shows how classroom pedagogy tended to be mainly oral and dominated by teacher talk with limited space for learner engagement. Informal written assessment tasks were monolingual, but generally mediated by translanguaging and translation. Learners relied on teachers and on the linguistic resources of peers to facilitate comprehension of assessment questions and assessment content. By contrast, formal, high-stakes assessments included no mediation prior to and during assessment. Thematic analysis of learners' written answers shows how the majority of learners struggled with language comprehension at the level of vocabulary, sentence, as well as schooled academic literacy. The study concludes that both teachers and learners are placed in an untenable position by language in education policies that insist on monolingual assessment practices. Such policy results in compensatory, and contradictory classroom teaching and learning that is aimed at instrumental, assessment focused practices rather than meaningful learning. The study ends with recommendations for policy and practice.

KEYWORDS: monolingual assessments, multilingualism, Translanguaging, multilingual assessments, assessment challenges.

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 work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

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Date:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Chapter 1

1.1 Rationale of the study and research aim.....	09
1.2 Research questions...	11
1.3 Background of the school.....	11
1.4 Linguistic profile of the school.....	11
1.5 Chapter outline.....	12

Chapter 2

2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.1 Linguistic repertoire.....	13
2.2 Translanguaging.....	14
2.3 Translanguaging in assessments.....	16
2.4 Bilingualism, teaching and learning.....	17
2.5 Ideological model of literacy.....	19
2.6 pre-textual gap.....	20
Literature Review.....	22
2.7 Assessment in Multilingual contexts.....	22
2.8 The use of PIRLS In the multilingual context.....	22
2.9 Multilingual assessments.....	23
2.10 Classroom based assessments.....	24
2.11 Language proficiency demand in assessments.....	24
2.12 Conclusion.....	26

Chapter 3

Research design and methodology...27

3.1 Case study.....	27
3.2 Data collection tools.....	28
3.3 Data collection summary.....	30
3.4 Research site and sample.....	34
3.5 Data analysis.....	34
3.6 Ethical considerations.....	35
3.7 Researcher bias and validity.....	35
3.8 Conclusion.....	36

Chapter 4

4.0 Introduction.....	37
4.1 Assessment challenges.....	41
4.1.1. Skipping a question due to word complexity.....	50
4.1.2 Assessment challenge: slow pace of writing due to lack of understanding questions	53
4.2 Assessment incomprehension.....	55
4.2.1 Assessment incomprehension: learners write questions as answers part 1.....	56
4.2.2 Assessment incomprehension: learners write questions as answers part 2.....	58
4.2.3. Language challenge: Writing meaningful expression.....	63
4.3 Teachers' notions of their support of multilingual learners.....	66
4.3.1 Scaffolding- guided meaning making.....	66
4.3.2 Supporting multilingual learners- translation.....	69
4 Language and literacy practices.....	72
4.4.1 Learners' experiences of translanguaging as a language practice in the classroom.....	72
4.4.1.2 Linguistic repertoire: learners' invented spelling.....	75
4.4.1.2.1 Linguistic repertoire – learner's home language linguistic features.....	77
4.4.1 Literacy practices- Drafting assessments.....	82
4.4.2 Literacy practice: Diary and letter writing.....	83

4.4.2.1 Diary writing.....	84
4.4.2.2 Writing a letter.....	86
4.5 Language and assessment resources in the classroom.....	88
4.5.1 Learners' conceptions of their teacher as a language and assessment resource and meaning facilitator.....	88
4.5.2 Dictionary and a library as a language & assessment resource.....	89
4.6 Language ideologies.....	91
4.6.1 English hegemony and extensive use in the multilingual classroom.....	92
4.6.2 Learners' language preference.....	93
4.6.3 English Language valorisation over African languages.....	95
4.7 Effect of LIEP in Assessment.....	97

Chapter 5

5. Findings and recommendations.....	100
5.1 Introduction.....	100
5.2 Findings.....	100
5.3 Recommendations.....	102
5.4 Conclusion.....	103
5.5 References.....	104
5.6 Appendices.....	118

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Emeritus Associate Professor Rochelle Kapp, my supervisor for her unwavering support for this research project. The journey to completion, would have been much more challenging, without her indelible contributions and guidance. Her timely response was crucial in holding me responsible to the goals I set for myself, no matter how unrealistic they were. She delivered feedback in a very diplomatic manner encouraging me to continue writing.

I wish to thank my dear wife, for her understanding and tolerance of my absence due to my research obligations. I further thank my friend Mfundo for his support and words of encouragement and constantly reminding me that our dreams and aspirations are valid.

I want to thank my brother, for keeping me under his wing, during the outbreak of Covid-19 and for allowing me to use his business space and resources to meet my research targets.

I appreciate the consistent mentorship of my friend, James Evidence, who also proofread this research project.

I want to further extend gratitude and thanks, to MasterCard scholars' program for funding my master's research and coursework. May you continue to support an African child with funding, to realise his or her dreams.

Lastly thank you to the school, learners and teachers who contributed to make this study feasible.

I end my gratitude with two biblical verses, Jeremiah 29 vs 11 and Habakkuk 2:3.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Language in Education Policy (LIEP)

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

Language of teaching and Learning (LOLT)

Curriculum Assessment Policy and Statement (CAPS)

Progress in reading in literacy study (PIRLS)

University of Cape Town (UCT)

First Additional Language (FAL)

Home Language (HL)

Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) CHAPTER 1- Introduction

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1.1 Rationale

This qualitative case study focusses on the experiences and challenges of multilingual learners when writing monolingual assessments. It draws on a growing body of theory on linguistic repertoire and translanguaging in order to understand how a group of grade 6 multilingual learners engaged with monolingual assessments in a working-class school in the Western Cape. My study was prompted by a research finding in my honours research paper, which highlighted a mismatch between bilingual classroom practices and monolingual assessment practices. This has led me to explore how learners negotiate such contexts. This mismatch is arguably caused by the lack of appropriate provision for multilingual learners in South Africa's language in education policies, as well as in the interpretation of language policy at a school level. Most South African learners enter school knowing more than one language, reflecting the multilingual reality of the South African context.

English is a home language for less than 10% of the population (Graven and Robertson, 2020). However, English is the dominant language of learning and teaching in the majority of schools. While the national language policy (Department of Education, 1997) advocates additive bilingualism and offers a choice of any of the official languages, CAPS (Curriculum Assessment Policy and Statement) (Department of Education, 2012) explicitly assumes that the LOLT (Language of teaching and Learning) is English for the majority of learners and so do provincial education departments (McKinney, 2017).

Multilingual classrooms practices are also discouraged by school language policy (Banda, 2010 and McKinney, 2017). Research has shown that multilingual practices often characterise verbal classroom practice, but that such practices are relatively covert (Probyn, 2009) and often compensatory (Kapp and Arend, 2011). Classroom writing tasks and formal written assessments are generally conducted in English, with an increasingly small number of schools offering Afrikaans as LOLT. One of the primary objectives of this research study is to understand how learners navigate these contradictory language and literacy assessment practices and their effects on learner performance in assessments.

Multilingual learners generally come to school verbally proficient and able to make meaning in more than one language, especially their home language. The learners are

then expected to access curriculum content, learn, and be assessed in one language usually their second or third language.

While classroom teaching and learning practices in such working-class, South African contexts are relatively well-researched (see, Probyn, 2009; Hendricks, 2009; Kapp, 2012 and Makoe, 2007) the analyses of assessment tend to be based on statistical interpretation of standardized test scores (see Spaul and Hoadley, 2017) or critiques of the language and literacy assumptions in such tests (Prinsloo and Krause, 2018).

One of the primary objectives of this research study is to understand (in context) how learners navigate these contradictory language and literacy assessment practices and their effects on learner performance in assessments. I have chosen grade 6, as it represents the most senior class of the intermediate phase, where learners are taught elementary language and literacy skills, and have had experience of assessment. I want to understand the kinds of language and literacy challenges that grade 6 learners come across during the assessment. This is important to understand comprehension and literacy challenges during assessment practices and why multilingual learners underperform when they are being assessed (see Merga, 2020) as well as their use of linguistic resources, and strategies to make meaning.

To explore and understand the effects of monolingual assessments imposed on multilingual learners, would arguably require that I look at the language and literacy practices in the multilingual classroom and understand the transition of bilingual/multilingual teaching to monolingual assessment. A primary motivation for this research study is to understand learners' experiences and engagement with assessments in order to begin a process of understanding how policy and practice can be developed which recognises and harnesses learners' multilingual resources Shohamy (2011) and Otheguy, Garcia and Reid (2015).

1.2 Research questions.

Main Question: What are grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences with monolingual assessment practices?

Sub-questions:

- What are the challenges faced by multilingual learners when engaging with monolingual assessments?
- What linguistic resources do multilingual learners employ when engaged with monolingual assessments?
- How do teachers support multilingual learners during assessment practices?

1.3 Background of the school.

The research study was conducted in a primary school, in a township on the outskirts of Cape Town. Highlands Primary (a pseudonym) has an enrollment of 42 teachers and 1480 learners. The school is attended by black and colored learners. Most learners live in the neighborhood and walk to school.

The township is characterized by unemployment and poverty. Scheduled learning and assessment activities are frequently postponed because of community warfare, as well as service delivery protests.

1.4 Linguistic profile of the school.

The languages spoken by the learners and teachers at the school include IsiXhosa, Afrikaans, Shona,

IsiZulu and English. Most learners speak Xhosa and Kaaps, a variety of Afrikaans, as home languages. The school offers IsiXhosa, English and Afrikaans as subjects.

According to my observations, in practice, the LOLT is both English and Xhosa for English FAL, Social Sciences and IsiXhosa home language and strictly English LOLT for the English Home language class. However, the school's official language policy advocates for English and Afrikaans LOLT for English and Afrikaans home language learners. In the main, the dominant and extensively used language on assessment papers is English. The latter is endorsed in the school's language policy in accordance with the Language in education policy (LIEP). According to the school principal (see Appendix E) the pass rate of the school is adequate, however, there are IsiXhosa home language speakers who are not performing well academically. These are

learners who are not are assessed in their home language from grade 4 up to grade 7, yet Afrikaans and English home language learners are assessed in their home languages from grade 1 to grade 7.

My project will explore how multilingual learners navigate the monolingual assessment practices and material. It will focus on the assessment and language challenges that grade 6 multilingual learners may encounter and what resources are in place to assist multilingual learners to overcome such challenges. In addition, the research study will explore how assessment practices are conducted in relation to what the school's language policy stipulates and advocates on languages to be utilized in the school.

1.5 Chapter outline

In Chapter 2, I will explore Theory and literature relating to monolingual assessments and multilingual learners. I present a theoretical framework and draw from literature relating to linguistic repertoire, translanguaging in assessments, multilingual assessments and language proficiency demand in assessments.

Chapter 3 follows with research design and methodology. I motivate reasons for why I chose to employ a qualitative case study and ethnographic methods. I explain the process of collecting and analyzing my data and outline a detailed background of my research participants and site.

Chapter 4 describes and analyses my data using extracts from field notes, and interviews conducted. It focuses on how multilingual learners experience and navigate monolingual assessment practices including assessment challenges, and how teachers support multilingual learners. Lastly chapter 5 summarises the research findings and makes recommendations for assessment policy and practice in such multilingual settings.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW.

2. Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of theoretical concepts concerning language ideologies, fluidity of language and the linguistic repertoire employed by multilingual learners who engage with monolingual assessment practices and materials. It will be followed by a review on research that connects to the research questions, by exploring traditional and contemporary concepts and views in relation to multilingual learners and monolingual assessments.

2.1 Linguistic repertoire

The concept of the linguistic repertoire is central to this study which seeks to understand how multilingual learners use their linguistic repertoire in relation to informal and formal assessment practices. Busch (2012) describes linguistic repertoire as the ability to communicate in varied speech patterns to adapt to new situations. Building on Gumperz' (1964) notion of speech communities, the concept of linguistic repertoire "marks a shift by post-structuralist theorists away from structuralist approaches which foreground fixed grammatical systems, to a multidimensional approach which acknowledges fluidity and creativity in linguistic practices" (Busch, 2012:4). It considers how multilingual speakers make meaning by choosing from their language resources. In Busch's view, by the time children reach primary school, they have acquired a linguistic repertoire, but that repertoire is seldom considered within formal classrooms.

The main idea behind Gumperz's sociolinguistics of interpersonal communication is that speakers are members of social and cultural groups and as such the ways they use language, not only reflects "their group identity but also provides indices of who they are, what they are, what they want to communicate, and how they want to be (Ibid:503). Gumperz argues that "multilingual repertoires are formed as wholes, and language and dialects are intertwined to constitute a behavioural whole, regardless of their grammatical differences" (Busch, 2012: 504).

However, this notion of the linguistic repertoire has come to be challenged by the concept of Superdiversity. Busch (2012) asserts that the term superdiversity was

coined by Vertovec (2007) to explicate the phenomenon of expanding globality and mobility in the late years of the twentieth century and early 21st century. Superdiversity challenges the long-held notion by traditional sociolinguists, that linguistic repertoires are grounded in long lasting stable communities of practice. The latter contests the notion that all children enrolled in schools are proficient in one language, therefore that their teaching, learning and assessment should be delivered in one linguistic mode. It foregrounds the notion that, speakers tend to engage in varied network practices.

2.2 Translanguaging

The concept of superdiversity has opened spaces for notions of translanguaging to be discussed in relation to linguistic repertoire (Garcia and Wei, 2014). Translanguaging is a relatively recent, still developing theory and language practice, coined by Cen Williams (1994), in his Welsh Study drawing from his research on in the 1980s (Lewis et al., 2012). Initially translanguaging was a term used to explain bilingual ways of conversing in the Welsh context. It has been expanded to a theory since through the works of Garcia (2009) and Baker (2001) and several other scholars, including Blackledge and Creese (2010); Canagarajah (2011); Creese and Blackledge (2010); Hornberger and Link (2012); Li (2011); and Lewis, Jones, and Baker, 2012a, 2012b).

Baker (2011:288) describes translanguaging as a “process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining and understanding knowledge through the use of two languages”. It is premised on the idea that languages are dynamic and integrated as single universal linguistic system (Garcia, 2009; and Garcia & Wei, 2014). In Canagarajah’s (2011: 401) words, it is “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages that form their linguistic repertoires as a unitary integrated system”. Similarly, Shohamy (2013) cited by Bisiah and Bisiah (2020:47) regards “translanguaging as a language practice of shaping connotation, accessing knowledge and understanding from the use of multiple languages in a single linguistic repertoire”. It allows learners to move freely between languages, drawing on linguistic tools of meaning making from their whole linguistic repertoire.

The central idea is that languages reinforce each other to facilitate comprehension and raise metalinguistic awareness (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). Thus, both languages are used by bi/multilingual speakers in a manner that is “dynamic,

functional, and integrated and organized to mediate mental process of speaking, reading, and writing including learning” (Ibid: 655).

The term translanguaging, has been widely accepted as a pedagogical term used to explain language alternation in the classroom, Cen Williams (1994). However, Lewis et al., (2012) posit that translanguaging as theory of bi/multilingual practice has extended beyond the classroom to different contexts, such as streets and workplaces (see García 2009). Thus, translanguaging acts as a unitary linguistic repertoire and system to which meaning is conveyed by bi/multilingual speaker selecting special features in their linguistic repertoire relevant to their communication (Canagarajah, 2011; Otheguy, García, & Ried, 2015, 2018).

Furthermore, translanguaging comes in two forms which are different in their application in context but not in practice, namely spontaneous and pedagogical translanguaging. Spontaneous translanguaging is used inside and outside the classroom, it is unplanned and not purposeful, whereas pedagogical translanguaging is used in the classroom by the teacher and the learners, for the mediation of meaning using more than two languages (Omidire & Ayob, 2020). Garcia (2009) contends that spontaneous translanguaging should be welcomed and accepted as a legitimate language practice because it captures the reality of bi/multilingual usage in naturally occurring contexts where boundaries between languages are blurred, fluid and constantly moving and changing (see also Li Wei, 2014 and Shohamy, 2011). These ideas are influenced by notions advanced by Makoni and Pennycook (2006) conception of “disinventing languages” and the work of Li Wei and Martin (2009) which assert that languages are not distinct codes, they “bleed into one another” (Li Wei and Martin, 2009).

In this sense, translanguaging is distinct from code-switching. Whereas codeswitching views languages as distinct linguistic systems, translanguaging is heteroglossic and challenges the concept of separate, stable named languages (García & Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2011). Arguably, codeswitching is concerned with the alternation of languages in speech and writing, whereas translanguaging is based on how multilingual learners, draw from their linguistic repertoires to access the curriculum. Importantly for this study, translanguaging works from the premise that languages are not distinct codes which can be turned on and off when communicating but can be used interchangeably in a single linguistic system and repertoire to facilitate comprehension. Translanguaging has been met with criticism (Jaspers & Malden, 2016). The critique is

that translanguaging cannot discredit the concept of language hierarchy and named languages, yet its educational objective is to learn named languages (Turner & Lin, 2020). This is because the content knowledge for which learners translanguage, to gain epistemic access demands that learners understand the language it is presented in. Notwithstanding this critique of translanguaging and its stance on 'named languages' it is, nevertheless, widely accepted that it is a practice used in everyday contexts that can be drawn on to facilitate learning in the classroom.

Despite the critiques of translanguaging, its value as a classroom practice has been foregrounded in a considerable body of recent research (see for example Creese and Blackwell 2010; Garcia 2009; Bisia and Singh 2019; Barros, Domke, Symons, and Ponzio, 2021). Creese and Blackledge (2010: 201) and Garcia (2009) regard translanguaging as a vital educational practice, to establish comprehension for learners to make sense of the world and academic material.

Several writers (García, 2009b; García & Wei, 2015; Heugh, 2015 and Probyn, 2015) describe translanguaging as a systematic and pedagogically sound means of connecting the LoLT and the languages of learners. It is a meaning-making process which does not only enable students to use resources from various languages, but also validates the home languages and knowledge of multilingual students in the classroom (Cenoz and Gorter, 2015). Through the use of pedagogical translanguaging, which is intentional and planned by the teacher for multilingual learners to *be* able to employ linguistic features out of their linguistic repertoire, student performance can be enhanced (Cenoz & Santoz, 2020). It can enhance participation and willingness to learn (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Translanguaging as a language practice resonates well with the focus in this study on understanding the language practices of multilingual learners in the classroom during their engagement with monolingual assessments.

2.3 Translanguaging in assessments.

Herdina and Jessner (2002:7) argue that “as long as bilinguals are measured according to monolingual criteria, they appear to be greatly disadvantaged both in linguistic and cognitive terms”. De Backer, Van Avermaet, & Slembrouck, 2017 argue that when multilingual learners are assessed, they are assessed by using monolingual assessments which prompt learners to respond exclusively in a language they are still learning to master in school. When learners defiantly and/or unwittingly use special

features from their linguistic repertoires, the sentences they construct and present on assessment papers, are often penalised regardless of whether the answer is correct because it is presented in a language that is different from the official LOLT.

Various scholars argue that translanguaging should be part of assessments, especially assessments conducted in multilingual classrooms. Lopez et al., (2017) argue that translanguaging allows learners and teachers to use multiple languages as resources to facilitate assessments (see Canagarajah, 2011 and Gorte & Cenoz, 2017). Advocates of translanguaging as a strategy in assessment call for assessments that accommodate learners' translingual practices to aid assessment challenges of multilingual learners when engaged with monolingual assessments. It is common in many classrooms across the world to find learners who are bi/multilingual assessed in a second language (Cenoz and Gorter 2015). Translanguaging in assessments, allows assessments to be discussed in both languages and opens up the possibility for assessment questions and content to be discussed in one language whilst another language is used for writing. Therefore, a translanguaging approach in assessment aims to connect learners' language with the language of assessment, to enable assessment accommodations to be based on translingual practices.

2.4 Bilingualism, teaching and learning.

It follows from the discussion above that understanding of bilingualism in education has shifted since its early theorisation in the 1970s. Cummins (1974), a significant researcher in the field, theorised about additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism and hypothesised in his early study of bilingualism that when one language is used, the other language is active and can be accessed (Garcia & Wei, 2014 citing Dijkstra, van Jaarveld and Ten Brinke, 1998; Thierry et al, 2009). Cummins (1981) opines that additive bilingualism is learning an additional language whilst the first language is maintained. Contrary to additive bilingualism is subtractive bilingualism, which is the replacement of the first language by the second language, whereby there is more emphasis on learning the second language (Heugh, 2011).

Notably Garcia (2009) asserts that notions of additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism are problematic because they view bilingualism from the perspective of monolingual norms. This arguably becomes problematic for multilingual learners, who are accustomed to drawing meaning from an additional language. Makalela (2015) and Garcia & Lin (2017) argue that subtractive bilingualism and additive bilingualism

are grounded in monoglossic ideologies that view languages as hermetically sealed bounded entities. This is significant in the South African context because the 1997 language in education policy paper (Department of Education, 1997) draws on Cummins (2002) to advocate additive bilingualism as the approach to teaching and learning. The policy advocates education through the medium of the home language or languages.

Further, as McKinney (2017) points out, the policy allows for the interpretation that learners may learn through the medium of their home language from grade 1 to grade 3 and switch to learning through the medium of an additional language from grade 4 (Department of Education, 1997). While Cummins (2002) asserts that for learners to learn successfully by using the second language, it is vital that they have proficiency in the second language, in South Africa, it is not uncommon to find learners in grade 6 who are still grappling with English (Graven & Sibanda, 2018).

These language challenges are compounded by learners' limited access to language resources in school and out of school. As McKinney (2017) argues, the policy and its subsequent interpretation in CAPS and in school policy, effectively endorses a monolingual approach to the language of learning which takes little account of context and places English at the top of a hierarchy of languages. She states that "schools and teachers typically treat languages as autonomous objects that must be kept apart from each other" (2017:109). This perspective on policy is relevant to the research project, which seeks to explore and understand how multilingual learners navigate assessments which are presented in a language, in which grade 6 learners may possess minimum competency to decode meaning in assessment materials. This relates to Gee's (2008) notion of learning and equity. Learners who have not been exposed to the same experiences of linguistic domain, have not had the same opportunity to learn. In this reasoning monolingual assessments are ideally designed for monolingual learners and do not reflect the learning context of multilingual learners.

Importantly, Brock-Utne (2009) maintains that the idea of 'adding' a language makes sense in monolingual contexts and not in multilingual African context. Thus, more recent language and literacy scholars have advocated for "dynamic bilingualism: the

multiple use of linguistic repertoires and languages interchangeably across a linguistic system” (Wright, Boun & Garcia, 2017:224). Garcia & Wei (2014:14) elaborate:

Dynamic bilingualism suggests that the language practices of bilinguals are complex and interrelated; they do not emerge in a linear way or function separately since there is only one linguistic system. Dynamic bilingualism goes beyond the idea that there are two languages that are interdependent as in Cummins (1979); instead, it connotes one linguistic system that has features that are most often practiced according to societally constructed and controlled ‘languages’, but other times producing new practices.

The above quote reinforces the idea that languages are not separated or sealed bounded entities that need to be moulded and honed distinctively, in fact languages are interrelated and function in a single linguistic system (ibid). Dynamic Bilingualism includes the practice of translanguaging, which arguably has the potential to benefit learners in the classroom (see Garcia; 2009, 2011 and Makelela; 2015).

2.5 Ideological model of literacy

An important part of my study is to develop an understanding of learners’ negotiation of literacy practices. In this respect, New Literacy studies theorists have made a significant contribution in their conceptualisation of literacy as ideological and their critique of autonomous models of literacy that view literacy as a universal skill-based activity

The notion of the ideological model of literacy was coined by New Literacy studies theorists in reaction to autonomous models of literacy which view literacy as a universal skilled based activity. Street (1984) describes literacy as social practice and foregrounds how literacy is utilised and how knowledge is acquired in a context. According to the Ideological model of literacy, literacy can be observed, interpreted and explained through literacy practices and literacy events:” Literacy practices are the general cultural ways which people draw upon in their daily lives, in simplest sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy” (Barton & Hamilton, 1998: 6-7). Drawing on the work of Shirley Brice Heath, Street describes a “literacy event as any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participant’s interaction and their interpretive processes (Heath, 1982: 93, in Street 2006:5).

There is arguably a relationship between literacy practices and assessment practices. School assessments are primarily based on reading and writing. Learners' engagement in the monolingual assessment practices and materials can be regarded as literacy practices and a specific moment of test-taking would be a literacy event. When answering assessment materials, learners are expected to read texts and respond to questions that relate to comprehension and interpretation of certain texts. Gee (2008) argues that these texts that learners are expected to interact with are often decontextualized. Moreover, the texts are generally written in a formal, subject-based register and variety of English with which learners are unfamiliar. As Gee (2008) points out, disciplines are characterized by particular ways of constructing knowledge that are inextricably connected to their ways of using language.

The Ideological model of literacy is a significant conceptual framework, to understand how multilingual learners negotiate subject-specific language and literacy assessment issues. The emphasis in this model of literacy on how people use language and literacy resources will be useful in understanding how learners apply literacy and language in context.

2.6 pre-textual gap

Maryns and Blommaert (2002) argue that the concept of pre-textual gap is rooted in sociolinguistics and its main aim is to understand linguistic inequality. They assert that where there are linguistic inequalities, there is a likelihood that there will be a pre-textual gap. They explain that the concept of pre-textual gap refers to the differences between what is anticipated in communication and what persons can bring and employ in communication. These differences are socially rooted and often unnoticed (Maryns and Blommaert, 2002). Maryns and Blommaert (2002) then establish parallels and distinctions between pre-textuality and pre-textual gaps, arguing that pre-textuality is a set of conditions that influence communicative behaviour and pre-textual gaps are differences in such preconditions among communication participants.

Maryns and Blommaert (2002 :13) argue that "speaker pre-textuality can thus be conceptualised in terms of a package of socially preconditioned knowledge articulated in speakers' personal 'baggage' and assessments of what is meaningful in the interaction combined with his/her capacity to anticipate what is required and hence will be

recognised as meaningful in the ongoing text trajectory". In addition, as a result of the intricate social and discursive relationships inside and between speech communities, pre-textual gaps can be seen in a variety of interactions: The meanings that are produced or sought fall in the gap between what is recognized and what can be produced due to various limitations on sayability and interpretability (Ibid).

Circumstances on sayability, differential distribution of access to these conditions, and social evaluations related to such inequalities are all referred to as pretextual gaps. Successful communication necessitates not only the participants' ability to anticipate what the interlocutors expect to create meaning potential, but also the ability to convey these meanings using language-ideologically marked resources such as code, medium, channel, mode of narration, and so on (Maryns and Blommaert, 2002). To summarize, recognizing diversity and the presence of pretextual gaps in human communication is a prerequisite for recognizing the power entrenched in discursive interactions, the resulting social inequality, and the effects this may have on the quality of any individual's life in society. In addition, I will argue that the concept of pretextual gap doesn't only emerge when there is a mismatch in contexts, but also when the school language policy (monoglossic English), curriculum, and language practices do not correlate with the learners' language practices. This concept is relevant to my research where learners are required to respond to assessment questions, and when they do respond, the learners' assessment answers do not match the expectations of the teacher and the assessment.

Literature Review

2.7 Assessment in Multilingual contexts

In this section, I explore some of the key research which has shed light on principles of assessment and on assessment in multilingual contexts

2.8 The use of PIRLS In the multilingual context.

Much of the recent research focus on language and literacy in the South African context has focused on the poor performance of primary school learners in standardized international tests. These tests are designed to assess the literacy skills and literacy progress of grade 4 learners in early grade learning. Learners from over 50 countries are benchmarked according to their reading and writing capabilities. A report on the “Progress in reading in literacy study” (PIRLS), released in 2017 caused a public outcry about the state of literacy in South Africa because the report stipulated that 78% of South African children cannot read for meaning, when compared to the 4 percent of children over 50 countries where the tests were administered (Howie et al, 2017).

Prinsloo (2021) argues that there is little that these tests can tell us except the claim that they test literacy skills. A pertinent issue in the PIRLS is the language issue. The questions in the tests are originally in English and are subsequently translated to 10 South African official languages (Prinsloo, 2021). Prinsloo argues that the assumption is made that South African children will have ease in understanding the translated versions in their home languages or equivalent standardized indigenous languages.

Further, the PIRLS, consist of passages initiated in the United Kingdom (UK), with UK content knowledge and experience (Mullis et al., 2015). Thus, these passages do not relate to learners’ experience and knowledge of the world. Further, the tests that examine literacy skills remain “context free grounded on the ideology and assumption that they are universally applicable” (Prinsloo, 2021:13).

In this respect Prinsloo (2006) asserts that the PIRLS is based on the autonomous model of literacy which regards literacy as skilled based ability and activity that is free of context and can be universally applied. Hence it does not view literacy as a social practice incorporated with knowledge and activities that are context embedded. In connection to the latter, Prinsloo (2017) contends that the PIRLS tests examine

learners' reading ability, carrying the assumption that all learners have developed language competency.

Contemporary linguistic research, indicates that, to make sense of PIRLS results, the issue of language and literacy needs to be addressed, meaning there has to be a critical examination as to how literacy is taught and how languages are infused in how we learn literacy (See, Janks, 2016; Prinsloo, 2020; Spaul & Hoadley, 2017).

2.9 Multilingual assessments.

While research on multilingualism in education is gaining momentum, there is a dearth of research on multilingual assessments and how they should be administered in schools. Sierens and Avermaet (2014) argued that we need an assessment system which is multilingual and will allow interactions among students. Shohamy (2011) says that though multilingual teaching and learning have been promoted very often in the classroom, there are very few voices to argue in favor of promoting multilingual assessment in the classroom.

In their study on approaches used for assessing the speech and language needs of bilingual children, White and Jin (2011) argue that multilingual assessment often receives scant attention, and consequent misdiagnosis of problems face by multilingual students, resulting in deficit constructions. Heugh et al. (2017) argues for multilingual assessments that provide learners with an opportunity to illustrate both their content knowledge and language proficiency by drawing from their whole linguistic repertoire.

In South Africa, the dual language assessment approach has been used to exalt multilingualism. For example, learners will be assessed content subjects, using assessment papers, printed both English and Afrikaans separately, even if they are assessing the same content (Van Dulm and Southwood, 2013). Such dual language assessments, which technically are monolingual assessments, treat languages as discreet entities. In other words, languages are used separately to assess language proficiency and content comprehension and it is common to find students penalised in assessments for writing answers in an undesired language or target language, even if learners have demonstrated logic, skill and comprehension in that language (Heugh and Stroud, 2020).

Bisai and Singh (2019) postulate that, for assessment to achieve equity in assessing multilingual learners, it must meet the following assessment principles. 1. Useful 2. Equitable 3. Efficient 4. Reliability 5. Validity 6. Holistic. Therefore, an assessment should be a useful tool that gives every learner an equal chance of assessment success, efficient enough to capture learners' skills and knowledge. Second the assessment should be valid by measuring what it intends to assess by applying varied means of assessing learners.

2.10 Classroom based assessments.

Classroom based assessments, are assessments normally administered in the classroom at the discretion of the teacher. Assessment has been dubbed as one of the most productive practices of instruction (Blair, Rupley & Nicholas, 2007). It is regarded as a tool for improving teaching and learning (Jane, 2013). It provides knowledge to the teacher of student learning and how the student responds to content knowledge (O'Meara, 2011). In addition, assessment brings about a critical role in supporting and challenging learners to meet the set objectives of the curriculum. Assessment is crucial to support and enhance learning, as well as a reflective process for the teacher to adapt instruction. Assessment comes in four forms (Gargano, 2021), which are formative, summative, baseline and diagnostic assessments but for the purpose of this study, the focus is on summative and formative assessments.

Formal assessment provides a teacher with knowledge of a student's performance and academic achievement. This serves to guide instruction (Rock et al, 2008). A summative assessment confirms whether curriculum goals have been met or not (O'Meara, 2011). Classroom assessments in languages, such as English, Xhosa and content subjects such as social sciences, involve assessment practices encompassed with assessment accommodation, especially when assessments are conducted in a language in which learners have minimum linguistic competency. Assessment accommodations are intended to remedy language challenges.

2.11 Language proficiency demand in assessments.

In South Africa's primary school context, most assessment materials are printed in English (see Reyneke, 2016). Pretorius and Spaull (2016) contend that language proficiency is the foundation of learning to read, vice versa. However, for this to occur,

learners must be proficient readers. Reading influences and provides rich and powerful resources for learning.

Gee (2015: 52) states that even for “English learners the challenge of learning an academic language is greatly magnified.” Hence the focus of the study is to ascertain how multilingual grade 6 learners engage with monolingual assessments that are presented in an academic language. Research shows that learners are likely to grapple with the conversational style of the language before mastering the academic style of the language (Cummins 2008). This is emphasized by Cummins (2008) in elucidating the distinction between Basic interpersonal language skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic language Proficiency (CALP).

Cummins (2008) expounds on the distinction between Basic interpersonal Communication skills (BICS) and Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in expressing the functions of a language... Cummins (2013) in his explanation of social and academic language acquisition, elucidates that BICS, are language skills needed in cognitively undemanding, context embedded situations where people need language skills to socialise and interact with other people and where para-linguistic cues can aid meaning. By contrast CALP is associated with formal academic language and used for academic purposes, and, according to Cummins, it takes to 7 years of immersion in a context infused with academic language for learners to acquire it (Ibid).

In the South African context, empirical research conducted by Sibanda (2017) aimed at understanding the language use during the transition from grade 3 to grade 4 reveals that in numerous instances in the classroom learners engage with assessments drawing on BICS in English language. Sibanda (2014) argues that BICS has the potential to mask the limitations of CALP. For instance, a learner may produce relatively good language communication skills but be challenged when using the language for cognitively demanding, decontextualised literacy tasks, such as assessments. A second language challenge that may manifest as learners interact with assessment material is that learners may be taught in the African language spoken by the teacher while the assessment is printed in English (OwenSmith, 2010).

2.12 Conclusion

We learn and make meaning through language. There is thus a strong correlation between language challenges and assessment challenges because language is used to assess learners. Significantly, school literacy practices entail specialized ways of using language. When learners have basic levels of language proficiency, they may arguably have trouble accessing the cognitively demanding literacy practices required by assessment. As demonstrated above, in the South African context, a range of scholars have identified that multilingual learners' difficulties reside at the level of vocabulary, sentence level, register and social and cultural context (Setati et al 2002; Sibanda,2017; Sibanda & graven,2015). However, there has been limited focus on *how* learners engage with monolingual assessments in their second or third language. My study will draw on the concepts of linguistic repertoire, translanguaging and the ideological model of literacy and the work of key researchers described above to describe and analyses assessment practices.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that I employed to conduct the research study. In the main, I provide an overview of the research design and how data were collected and analyzed.

My research study has been designed as a qualitative case study which uses ethnographic tools to explore multilingual learners' experiences with monolingual assessments. I chose a qualitative research design because my project is based on an exploration of language in context. Haradhan (2018) defines qualitative research, as a social process which is exploratory. It seeks to describe and elucidate "how and why a particular social phenomenon operates and behaves the way it does in a social context" (Haradhan, 2018:24). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe systematically and interpret matters that rise from the phenomena being studied.

3.1 Case study.

Flyvberg (2011: 301) defines a case study as "an intensive analysis of an individual unit (person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to an environment". I chose to employ a case study, as described in chapters 1 and, following the theory on linguistic repertoire, translanguaging and the work by the New Literacy Studies' theorists outlined in chapter 2, my study focusses on practices, that is, what multilingual learners *do* with their language resources and how language, literacy and assessment practices are constructed and experienced in context. I am also interested in ascertaining what bilingual teaching strategies and resources teachers utilize to assist multilingual learners in the construction of meaning in assessments.

McMillan and Schumacher (2016: 316) describe a case study as focusing "on one phenomenon to understand it in-depth, regardless of the number of individuals and sites". A case study design helped me to follow how the process of assessment unfolded.

Taylor (1997) contends that a case study explains the process and an outcome of a phenomenon through a thorough, complete observation and analysis of the study under investigation. Following this, I observed grade 6 learners' responses to texts, to, assessment materials, and to formal and informal assessment.

3.2 Data collection

I drew on multiple data sources to facilitate triangulation (Maxwell, 2008). While qualitative research always includes subjectivity, collection of multiple data sources enables comparison between what people say and do and surfaces patterns, contradictions, and silences. A second advantage of using qualitative research design is that it allows for the elicitation of deeper insights into a social phenomenon, such as language and assessment (Rahman, 2020).

I collected data through classroom observations, photographs of classroom texts and assessments and interviews. I observed 46 classes over the data collection period, beginning from the 7th of April 2021 and end on 31st of May 2021. The focus of data collection was on three different grade 6 classrooms, and in the following subject areas: English home language, IsiXhosa Home language, Social Sciences and English FAL.

The purpose of classroom observations was to observe and record the practices and activities that transpire and occur in the classroom. I observed the classroom discourse, how the learners are being taught and assessed. In addition, I observed how learners engaged in activities and what languages(s) they utilized during discussions and when answering questions initiated by the teacher. An important focus was on how teachers supported multilingual learners during assessments. As a researcher sitting in the classroom, I wanted to note what challenges learners came across when engaged in assessment materials and assessment practices that are monolingual. I used field notes to record pertinent literacy events. I also used field notes to record and type my reflections. Philippi and Lauderdale (2017) recommend field notes when a researcher wants to record vital contextualized information. Hence field notes were useful to document when and how a particular language was used and when learners were allowed to draw on their linguistic repertoires.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants from the three grade 6 classes I had observed. I observed 123 learners from three grade 6 classrooms. Out of the 123 learners, I interviewed 14 learners and I then interviewed three teachers, focusing on Social Sciences, English FAL, and IsiXhosa Home language as subjects. As I was about to complete the data collection period, I noted a pertinent issue concerning

the school's language policy. Consequently, I also interviewed the principal to gain an insight into the language policy.

Semi-structured interviews are regarded as non-directive interviews as they do not follow a predetermined structure (Coughlan, 2009). I chose to use this type of interview because I wanted open ended spontaneous responses that would contribute to having a rich data. Mainly, semi structured interviews enabled me, to gain insight into the challenges experienced by learners during assessments to surface teachers' views on the linguistic resources they use to facilitate assessment practices and to elicit their views on the pedagogical strategies used to help multilingual students overcome the challenges that they face when dealing with monolingual assessments.

The learner interviews took place from 14 April 2021 up to 19 April 2021. I interviewed learners in pairs, and allowed them to choose partners so that they would feel comfortable. It was my intention to ensure that the environment felt safe and peaceful. I did not hold a formal interview with learners, but rather a conversation that included questions and answers from both myself and the learners. The purpose of this approach was to avoid learners feeling as though they were being assessed outside the classroom. At the start of the interviews, learners were asked to respond in the language they felt comfortable using and were told that they should feel free to mix languages. I explained to the learners that the interview would be audio recorded and then I asked learners questions in their home language, for learners to feel comfortable to respond.

The three teacher interviews were conducted separately and took place after completion of the observation. My aim was to build a rapport with the three teachers before I interviewed them. Each interview was approximately 20 minutes long and each was audio-recorded, Using English and isiXhosa as the mode of communication with the interviewees.

I was fortunate to engage with three multilingual grade 6 teachers who have a minimum of three years' experience of teaching and can speak and teach using more than one language. All three teachers' home language is Xhosa. Teacher 1 has 1 year of experience of teaching grade 6 multilingual learners at Highlands's primary school and 9 years' experience lecturing multilingual learners at a tertiary level. Teacher 1 is employed as an English home language teacher. Teacher 2 and teacher 3 are

employed as grade 6 teachers and teach English FAL and Social science to learners who are enrolled in school as Xhosa home language learners. T2 speaks three languages which are Xhosa, English and Afrikaans and has 11 years of teaching experience at Highland primary school and 13 years of overall teaching experience. Teacher 3 has 15 years of teaching experience including 2 years of experience of teaching grade 6.

3.3 Data collection summary

Data collection focused on how multilingual learners encountered monolingual assessments across two languages, their home language, and an additional language plus a social studies subject. I chose a content subject such as Social Sciences because of my view that when being assessed in such subjects, learners may not be limited to answer in one language. Each lesson observed was taught by a teacher who was a research participant to this research study. I began to collect data amid the assessment writing period, I was fortunate to observe all lessons, in which learners were writing second term assessments for all subjects, however my focus was limited to the subjects mentioned above.

I observed both formal and informal assessments, formal assessments being tests and examinations and informal assessments being classwork activities. During the observation I took field notes noting, important scenes of learner's engagement with monolingual assessments that contributed to my rich data. After my observations, I decided to select 14 learners from the three grade 6 classes. 4 learners were selected from the grade 6 home language class, 5 learners selected from the grade 6 English FAL and 5 learners from the social sciences class. Three teachers each teaching English Home language, English FAL and isiXhosa were interviewed. After I interviewed the three teachers, I also interviewed the principal of the school because I had questions about the school's language policy.

The table below summarizes how data for this research was collected and constructed through observations and interviews as the main data collection methods.

Observations						
lessons	Subject area	Number of learners	duration	Photographs taken	Artefacts	Data collection method
Lesson 1,2,3 06/04/21	English FAL	34 +42+40	2,45 minutes	25 photographs	workbooks	Field notes
Lesson 4,5,6 07/04/21	English FAL	34 +42+40	3 hours	18 photographs	workbooks	Photographs & field notes
Lesson 7,8,9 09/04/21	IsiXhosa HL	34 +42+40	2,45 minutes	21 photographs	workbooks	Filed notes
Lesson 10,11,12 10/09/19	Social Sciences- History assessment	34 +42+40	2,30 minutes	19 photographs	Assessments & workbooks.	Photographs and filed notes

Lesson 13,14,15 14/09/19	Social Sciences- Geography Assessment	34 +42+40	120 minutes	35 photographs	Assessments & workbooks	Photographs and filed notes
Lesson 16,17,18 15/04/19	English FAL- Language focus	34 +42+40	2,45 minutes	32 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photographs
Lesson 19,20,21 15/04/19	Social Sciences- Geography assessment	34 +42+40	2,45 minutes	23 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photographs

Lesson 22,23,24 16/04/19	Social Science- History assessment	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	15 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
Lesson 25,26,27 16/04/19	English FAL- Writing and presenting diary.	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	27 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
Lesson 28,29,30 16/04/19	IsiXhosa HL assessment	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	10 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
Lesson 31,32,33 18/04/19	English HL- Listen and speaking assessment	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	5 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
Lesson 34,35 19/04/202 1	English FAL- Language structures and convention s	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	18 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s

Lesson 36,37 19/04/202 1	English HL assessment	34+42	2,45 minutes	7 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
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Lesson 38,39,40 05/05/2021	English FAL- Note taking	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	22 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
Lesson 41,42,43 12/05/2021	English FAL- Writing and presenting.	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	4 photographs	Workbooks & assessments	Field notes & photograph s
Lesson 44,45,46 14/05/2021	English HL- Language structures and convention s	34+42+40	2,45 minutes	5 photographs	Assessment material	Field notes & photos
Interviews						
Type of interviews	Participant profile	Participant s	duratio n	Gender representatio n	Interview site	Interview approach
Group Interview	learners	3	23:57 min.	F & 2M	staffroom	Semi structured
Group Interview	Learners	3	16:17 min.	2F & M	staffroom	Semi structured
Group Interview	learners	2	09:58 min.	F & M	staffroom	Semi structured
Group Interview	learners	3	25:25 min.	2M & F	staffroom	Semi structured
Group Interview	learners	2	26:55 min	2M & F	staffroom	Semi structured
1 to 1	Educator	1	18:08 min	F	staffroom	Semi structured

1 to 1	Educator	1	16:55 min	F	staffroom	Semi structured
1 to 1	Educator	1	13:45 min	F	staffroom	Semi structured
1 to 1	Principal	1	50:09 min	M	Principal's office	Semi structured

Table 1: Overview of data collected

3.4 Research site and sample

I selected this research site purposefully because it is diverse in its linguistic demographics and I wanted to understand how assessments are experienced in language classes (in this case English FAL and isiXhosa HL) and in content subjects, specifically Social Sciences. I wanted a research site where the purpose was to determine how teachers and learners operate during assessment practices of the above-mentioned subjects.

3.5 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This method of analysis enabled me to generate themes and subthemes in correspondence to the data. Thematic analysis is understood to be a method of identifying, analyzing, reporting themes identified in the data (Ayob, 2020). A thematic analysis approach was utilized to understand conceptual significance (Dainte and Lightfoot, 2014) in relation to multilingual learners' engagements with monolingual assessment and to ascertain repetitive emerging patterns in the data (Javadi & Zarea, 2016)), as well as to identify contradictions.

Cresswell (2013) contends that themes are repetitive statements, and such statements would be treated with equal significance by the researcher. After identifying and developing these statements the "researcher should group them in large units of analysis called themes" (Cresswell, 2013: 193). Before data analysis, all audio data collected were transcribed. After data transcription, I undertook a preliminary data analysis. My research questions served as a guiding framework. I identified and noted dominant repetitions of concepts within my data which I classified as themes (Alhojalian, 2012). I color coded the themes, to make my data instantly visible. The themes were marked and became substantial in identifying extracts that form part of broad themes. From broad themes I was able to develop micro themes that corresponded to the research which resulted in the description and analysis as discussed in chapter 4, the data analysis and discussion chapter.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This research study observed ethical considerations of research and took full account of its ethical principles such as informed consent forms. Permission for the research to be conducted was obtained from the School of Education University of Cape Town (UCT) and the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED). The participants (teachers + learners) were informed about the research study, and they were given consent forms (see Appendix B). The consent forms were sent to their parents to read and sign, written in English and translated to IsiXhosa by the researcher. I kept participants anonymous by using pseudonyms and my engagement with them as a researcher was confidential. The research site was assigned a pseudonym and its location was limited to naming the city. Further, I explained the data collection process to the participants in both English and Xhosa and explained that they can opt out anytime. I used password encoded cloud storage and a USB drive to store data safely and securely.

3.7 Researcher bias and validity.

Sullivan (2011: 24) explains that “Validity in research refers to how accurately a study answers the study question or the strength of the study conclusions”. I visited the research site for an extended period, collecting data through multiple modes, such as field notes, photographs and audio recording. This enabled me, to generate credible rich data (Yin and Robert, 2014). I chose to use semi-structured interviews to eliminate the likelihood of research participants giving predetermined and expected answers of the interview, this was done to ensure credibility of the data. I shared my transcribed interviews to teachers as research participants, to avoid misquotations of participants’ assertions and interview answers that would lead to nonfactual representation of data and to ensure validity. Bloomberg and Vlog (2012) assert that credibility is essential for evaluating trustworthiness. During the assessment discussions by teachers and learners and the writing of assessments by learners, I was aware of the varied modes of meaning making, and I took note of nonverbal cues that at times accompanied spoken language.

3.8 Conclusion.

In this methodology section I discussed why I chose a qualitative research design and described the data collection tools I used. I also described how I collected and analysed data using a table.

CHAPTER 4: MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS EXPERIENCES WITH MONOLINGUAL ASSESSMENTS

4.0 Introduction.

In this chapter I describe and analyze the themes which emerged from my data analysis. In the first section, I present the monolingual assessment practices and challenges apparent in the classroom. Section 2 follows with a presentation and analysis of the language resources utilized by multilingual learners in the classroom. In section 3, I describe language and assessment challenges encountered by grade 6 multilingual learners. Arising out of the data, what follows next in section 4, is a discussion on language ideologies, English language dominance and language preferences of learners. Towards the end of the chapter, I examine the school's language policy in relation to learners' language of learning and assessment.

4.1 Monolingual Assessment practices.

While the learners in the school are mainly home language speakers of Afrikaans and isiXhosa, except for Afrikaans, all assessments are monolingual, that is, conducted in English. Nevertheless, as the following extracts from my fieldnotes illustrate, it is apparent, that while the assessment tasks are monolingual, classroom practices draw on multilingual resources.

Date	Grade	Subject	Assessment
06-04-2021	Grade 6	English FAL	Essay
In this period of the lesson, learners were given time by the teacher to finish up a classroom English FAL assessment which they had been meant to complete as part of homework. Learners in the English FAL Classroom are IsiXhosa HL speakers and Afrikaans HL speakers. Learners are given an activity to answer and complete. The teacher hands out a question paper and a rubric and instructs the learners on what is to be done to complete the activity. The language that the teacher uses to explain the activity questions (orally) is IsiXhosa, but the language used to emphasize meaning on the chalkboard is English. When asked questions in isiXhosa the learners respond in English. The teacher walks around the room, correcting grammar, spelling errors and easy format per learner, explaining misinterpreted concepts in IsiXhosa. The learners are meant to be writing. A learner gets up from her chair and goes to another learner to ask for explanation on what needs to be done. The two learners share content speaking isiXhosa and English. Another learner pats a learner sitting in front for correct spelling.			

Extract 1 typed filed notes

In this English FAL lesson learners were expected to write an assessment which is an essay. The learners were expected to write about a special day in their lives and how it affected them negatively and positively. Extract 1 is a summary of the activity that transpired during the lesson.

Significantly, while the teacher explains the evaluative criteria of the activity in both languages, the dominant home language (isiXhosa) is used extensively to create meaning. Therefore, isiXhosa is used to support English. The questions of the essay are explained using learners' L1 (home language) to achieve meaning. However, the meaning is extended through examples and emphasis on the chalkboard using English. During learners' assessment practice, the teacher monitors learners' use of language to facilitate learners' engagement with assessment questions. There is thus disconnect

between the languages used to engage with assessment and the language of assessment.

A similar instance is evident in the example below:

Date	Grade	Subject	Assessment
07-04-2021	Grade 6 D	English FAL	Term 2 Assessment
Learners were required to write an English FAL term 2 assessment The assessment was read out loud by the teacher in English and explanations of the question were done bilingually through mixing Xhosa and English language. To understand the assessment questions about a young man who had a dream of becoming a doctor, learners rely on support in the form of being assisted by fellow learners and the teacher. Learners assisted each other by explaining and translating English assessment questions, using Xhosa			

This methodology of mediating assessment bilingually was evident in most teachers' classroom practices with some variation as in the following examples.

Date	Grade	Subject	Assessment
07-04-2021	Grade 6C	IsiXhosa home language	Reading and viewing in IsiXhosa
Learners had to answer a comprehension. A learner is picked, to read whilst standing In front of the classroom facing learners. When the learner is done reading the prescribed part of the story. The teacher proceeds to read and asks the learners to tag along and follow suit (choral reading). Whilst reading, the teacher stops to explain word meanings using isiXhosa, but also using English for particularly complex IsiXhosa words. Resource: Ukhanyo, Incwadi yabafundi, ibanga 6. (Grade 6 IsiXhosa learners' book).			

It is significant that in an IsiXhosa classroom, during an IsiXhosa activity, English as a language, is used together with IsiXhosa to explain complex IsiXhosa vocabulary.

It is evident that in the lessons observed, monolingual assessment practices are

Date	Grade	Subject	Assessment
15-04-2021	Grade 6C	Social Science	Geography (assessment)
Before assessment questions are handed to learners, the teacher asks learners questions in English. For example, the teacher asks, which is the furthest from Cape Town to Ulundi or Mafikeng? After realizing no response from the learners, the teacher reiterates questions in English and translates in IsiXhosa to create meaning in the question for learners to understand/comprehend. The teacher shares evaluative criteria with the learners in English. Teacher refers learners to question 3.1 and instructs learners to read the question aloud in English (choral reading). The teacher then provides direction in isiXhosa: “Usebenzisa leh impa for question 3.1 (you use this map for question 3.1.			
15-04-2021	Grade 6D	English FAL	Language focus
After an assessment, the teacher provides answers and learners are instructed to correct their own work. Teacher does corrections with the learners. There is no follow up on whether learners have understood.			

characterized by bilingual oral discussions aimed at mediating meaning. The teacher is arguably attempting to facilitate comprehension through translation. As Panzarella and Sinibaldi (2018) assert, translanguaging is a key pedagogical tool to creating meaning (see also Baker 2011).

Extract 1.3: Field notes

Presented below are further examples of how teachers use translanguaging to facilitate monolingual assessments through the aid of mixing IsiXhosa and English to mediate meaning.

The teacher then says: Masewu gqhibile khuphela lento as it is iku page 27 (Masewu have you finished noting down what is on page 27).
Learners are directed to complete part B of the activity on homophones, but the teacher can see that the learners do not understand and scaffolds the learners understanding by explaining what homophones are used in English and IsiXhosa and does a few examples on the chalkboard.

The teacher verbalizes the assessment questions in English and translates to IsiXhosa, which is learners L1. Similarly, to Krause & Prinsloo (2016: 354), it seems that the teacher is using translanguaging as a tool, “where a teacher reads an English monolingual statement in one language and explains it in Xhosa”. Statements such as “Usebenzisa lena imap” and “Masewu gqhibile ukukhuphela lento as it is ikupage 27” in Extract 1.3 are examples of the reproduction of translanguaging, where assessment instructions are emphasized by mixing IsiXhosa and English to achieve meaning. The exemplified statements consist of heteroglossic terms, yet they carry meaning.

In the second lesson the learners were given a language focus activity. However halfway through the lesson the teacher realized that learners did not understand the whole activity and its questions. Therefore, the teacher made examples by writing on the chalkboard and by drawing on what homophones are in IsiXhosa (linking knowledge to content knowledge taught in the previous lesson). The latter is an example of reproductive translanguaging (Poza, 2017) where one language is used as a resource to mediate another language (ibid). In as much as the teacher explains in IsiXhosa (learners L1) the assessment is monolingual English. Towards the end of the lesson, learners were given their assessment scripts by the teacher to tick their answers to the activity whilst the teacher provided the correct answers.

4.2 Assessment challenges

In the interviews, teachers and learners described several assessment challenges experienced during assessment.

Learners foregrounded their difficulties with vocabulary as is evident in the extract below from an interview with two isiXhosa home language speakers who are studying English as an FAL.

Extract 1.4 learner interview, 21/04/2021

1. R: So, mos beni bhala assessmemnts neh, so zeziphi izinto, eniye ninziyelwe zizioho pha kwi assessments. **(So you were writing assessments, right? Then what difficulties do you experience in the assessments?)**
2. L: Intoni Titshala? **(What things teacher?)**
3. R: What language difficulties do you come across? Ubunzima be languages eniye nidibane nabo xanibhala assessments. **(Language difficulties do you encounter when you write assessments?)**
4. M: Kwi English abanye amagama abizwayo anzima. **(In English, some pronounced names are difficult)**
5. L: Nesi Xhosa amanye amagama asiyesiwazi. **(even Xhosa, some words we do not know)**
6. R: amanye amagama awayiphi subject/language? **(names in which subject/language?)** 7. L: awe IsiXhosa. **(that of Xhosa)**
8. R: Kwi IsiXhosa, niye ninga understandi xanibhala eyiph subject? **(When using Xhosa language, you don't understand when you write in what subject?)**
9. L+M: xa sibhala IsiXhosa **(when we write in the IsiXhosa subject)**
10. R: Kubakhona amagama eningawa understandiyo? **(There becomes words you do not understand?)**
11. L+M: ewe **(yes)**
12. R: xa ninga understandi niye nithini? **(When you do not understand, what do you do?)**
13. L: Sibuze kumisi kuba li mentiona ntoni eligama? **(We ask the teacher what this name means.)**
14. R: The anichazisele? **(Then s/he explains)**
15. All nod
16. R: Kwi English akhona amagama eniye nidibane nawo anzima? **(In English are there words that you don't understand)**
17. M: Ewe akhona. **(Yes there are)** KEY: R: Researcher, L: Lady, M: Mpumi

It is significant that while learners describe their difficulty with English vocabulary, they also encounter difficulty in IsiXhosa vocabulary. Learners mention that some IsiXhosa words pose difficulties when they are learning Xhosa and writing assessments. This is significant because, as described in chapter 2, these home language speakers of isiXhosa are studying English as a second language but are also expected to engage with difficult concepts and vocabulary through the medium of English across the curriculum. IsiXhosa, their home language is encountered as an academic subject only in the isiXhosa class. As shown in section 1 of this chapter,

isiXhosa is used in subject classes, but only in the mode of basic conversation, to

Extract 1.5: learners' interviews: Teachers as meaning makers, 21/04/2021

1. R: So ukuze ibe easier or make it meaningful niye nicele uncendo kubani? **(For it to be easier or meaningful, whom do you ask for assistance?)**
2. L+M: ku Misi **(the teacher)**
3. R: Okay, Niye nicele uncendo ku misi kuphela classini? **(Do you ask for assistance only from the teacher?)**
4. L: Sivumelekile sibuze nakwi classmates zethu **(we are allowed to ask from our classmates)**
5. R: Kwi classmates zenu niye nibuze ngeyiphi language? **(what language do you use when asking for assistance from your classmates)**
6. L+M: nge IsiXhosa **(In Xhosa)**
7. R: Nivumelekile ukubuza kwi classmates? **(are you allowed to ask for assistance from your classmates)**
8. L: ewe sivumelekile, naye uyazibuza ngamanye amaxesha. **(yes we are, even the teacher asks assistance from the fellow learners)**

KEY: R: Researcher, L: Lady

mediate English. These incongruences in language and literacy practices, exacerbate the difficulties of building academic language and literacy proficiency in both English and isiXhosa. In response to my question about how they negotiate difficult vocabulary, the learners said:

As is evident above, in the quest for meaning making in the classroom whilst engaged in assessment, the learners exchange explanations by using Xhosa which is their home language. Translanguaging as described by Baker (2001) and Garcia (2009), is thus an integral part of informal classroom assessment practices. However, this becomes difficult during formal summative assessments, as teacher and learner assistance is limited and learners resort to skipping the words and leaving the question blank as is evident from the excerpt below:

Extract 1.6, Learner interviews, 21/04/2021

1. R: Niye niyibhale exam andithi? **(Do you write an exam right?)**
2. K+O: ewe. **(Yes).**
3. R: xanibhala exam ibakhona chance yokubiza misi **(When you write an exam, is there chance of asking the teacher?)**
4. K+O: NO
5. R: uye uthini kengok xadibana negama ngalaziyo kwi question. **(What do you do then when you come across a word you do not understand in the question?)**
6. K: fune uyigqampe **(you must skip it)**
7. R: Heh? Uyayi Gqampa **(what? You skip it)**
8. O: Hayi wena **(No you)**
9. K: ewe uyayi gqampa. **(Yes, you skip it)**
10. R: xah uyi gqampa, uyigqampa ungayiphenduli? **(When you skip, you skip it, so that you don't answer the question?)**
11. K: ewe uyayi Gqampa ungayiphenduli. **(Yes you skip it and don't answer).**

KEY: R: Researcher, K: Kwanga; O: Odwa

Whereas the learners are used to being assisted by teachers explaining meaning and requirements of questions during formative assessments, during formal examinations (summative assessments), the learners are on their own. Learners have been socialised into the practice of “skipping” questions which they do not understand. Learners’ difficulties with complex words and subject specific vocabulary are evident in learners’ formal assessment responses. Figure 1 below is the text from a History test.

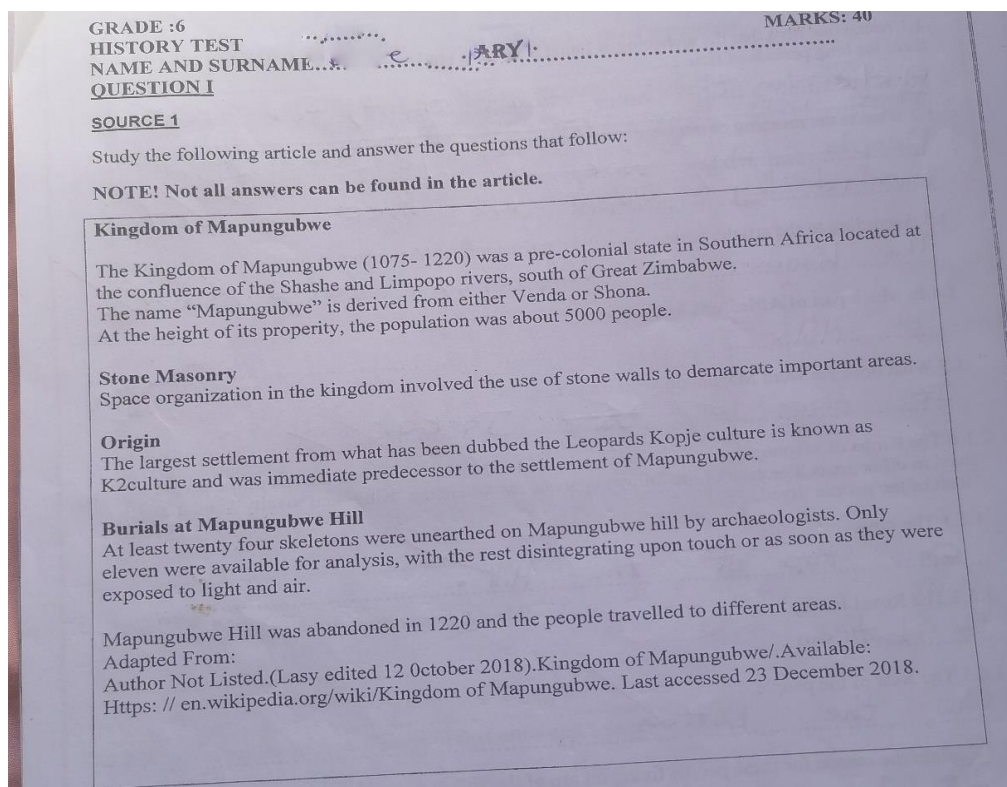


Figure 1: complex terminology used in the assessment material.

Learners were required to read the article about the Kingdom of Mapungubwe before answering the questions that followed. The purpose of the assessment was to assess learners' comprehension. The article was first read out loud by the teacher but in contrast to the practice during classroom assessment tasks, the words in the articles were not explained to the learners. Words such as "confluence", "derived" and "propriety" are complex words, even for home language speakers at this level. No glossary was provided. There are several words in the paragraphs that follow in the article that have specialized/contextualised meanings such as "abandoned", and "archeologist". These specialized words require comprehension of the context in which they are used, and for learners to use them appropriately would require learners to understand their meaning. Lack of comprehension of complex words with specialized meanings, arguably makes it difficult to make sense of the assessment questions requirements. This is evident in a learners' responses as in the following example in 1.2.

.....Sanatant..... ✓ (2)

2.6 Where did the Great Zimbabweans move to? (2)

.....Zimbabwe moved to Mapungubue North.....

2.6. The archeologist found some Ivory on the sites. What were they making with ivory? (2)

.....Ivory ivory glasses..... ✓

QUESTION 3

SOURCE 3

Between 1280 and 1450, Great Zimbabwe developed further north. Great Zimbabwe was a complex kingdom where the king, his family and advisors had more power than the ordinary people. The people in Great Zimbabwe traded gold, iron and ivory for the things like glass, cloth and glazed pottery with the Arab traders on the east coast.

3.1 About what time was Great Zimbabwe built? (1)

.....Mapungubue complex kingdom.....

3.2 What method was used to build the Great Zimbabwe? (2)

.....Gold iron..... ✓

3.3 What was the main resource that the people there used for trade? (2)

.....trade gold iron.....

3.4 In which cost were they trading? (2)

.....glazed..... ✓

(3)

Figure 1.2: captured from grade 6 learners history assessment.

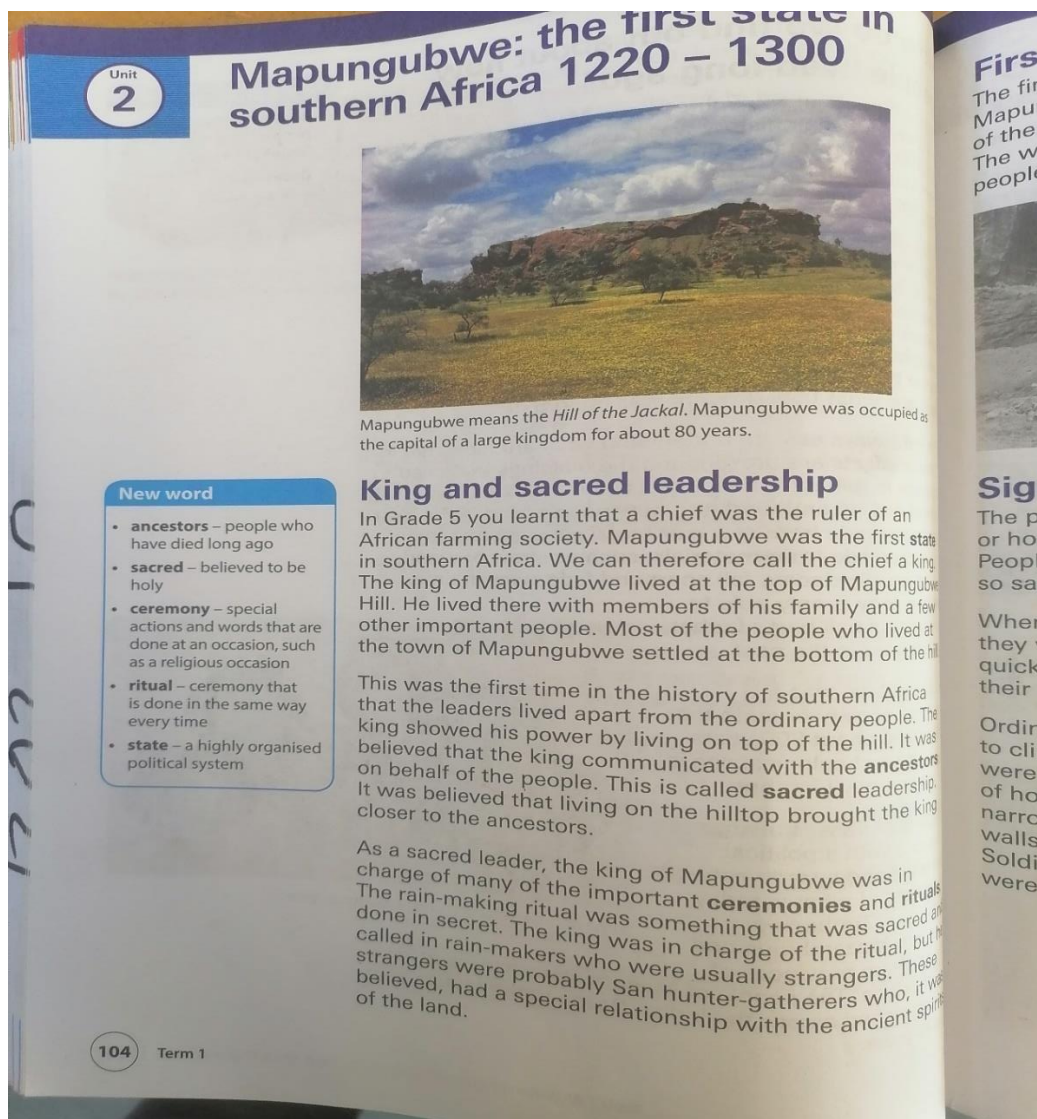


Figure 1.3 captured from grade 6 learners DBE book: complex words in learning materials.

The word is “archeologist”, and to answer this word the learner would have to first decipher what the word archeologist means before making meaning out of the whole question. Further, below in question 2.6, there is a complex word and also in the short passage of question 3. In the short passage there is a word identified as “complex”, this word adds to the motion and mood of the passage, it infers what the passage is about. Complex words found in the short passage, may be challenging for an English second language speaker who is still learning and relatively new to English as an academic language.



Figure 1.4: image captured from grade 6 learners Social Sciences DBE book.

Figure 1.3 and 1.4. Above depicts a story about Mapungubwe residents. The learners were expected to study the story for their History (Social Science) assessment. The learning materials include complex words. For example, in figure 1.3 there are words such as the word "significance". The grade 6 Social science learners' DBE books do have a glossary of key words that are deemed as complex. However, not all difficult words are explained, and words are not always explained in an accessible fashion. For example, conjoined words like "hunter-gatherers" are particularly difficult to access. The word "hunter" could possibly be, understood, but "gatherers" arguably may not be understood.

The assessment challenge of engaging with complex words is not limited to Xhosa HL, English FAL and SS, (Social Sciences), it extends to subjects such as Afrikaans FAL as depicted in the extract from an interview with learners below.

Extract 1.7: complex words in Afrikaans FAL assessment materials.

R: What challenges have you faced with assessments that are in a language that is not your home language?

L: Afrikaans

R: So it is difficult to answer assessments that are in Afrikaans

L: mhm, some words I don't understand and some words I understand.

R: Mhm?

L: Some of them I don't understand and some of them I understand.

R: what is that you do not understand?

Y: The questions in Afrikaans.

R: What in the questions don't you understand?

A: Me , Afrikaans, I speak Afrikaans, but I can

Read Afrikaans nicely but I high words of Afrikaans, I struggle, yeah, I struggle.

R: okay.

Y: I struggle in both languages, sometimes it is English and sometimes it is Afrikaans.

R: Okay

R: In English, what do you struggle with?

Y: With some words, with the words. Hard words yeah

R: Okay

Y: Afrikaans is. I can't read Afrikaans.

KEY: R: Researcher, Y: Yamnkela, A:Abel, L: Leticia

During the interview one learner (in line 13), affirms that she struggles in both English HL and Afrikaans FAL and this is evident in line 15 and line 18 with emphasis on struggles with "hard words".

It could be argued that the complex words or "high words" in learner terms, are a key factor in the comprehension of assessments. These words carry the meaning of a story and learners grapple to understand them due to their complexity and/or their

specialized use in context. This prompts learners to skip the question or to write slowly as is evident below.

4.2.1. Skipping a question due to word complexity.

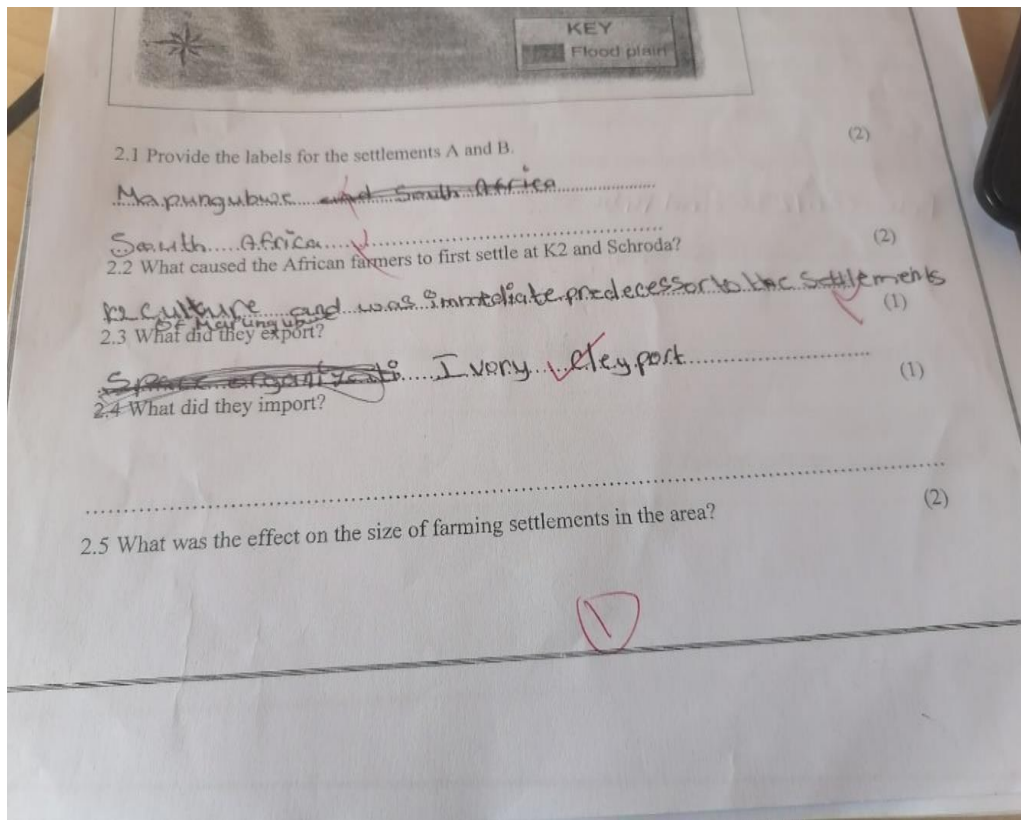


Figure 1.5 grade 6 history test: depicts how learners skip questions.

Figure 1.5 is captured from a learners' grade 6 History assessment. Section (2) of the History assessment required learners to label parts of settlement A and B and provide answers according to their comprehension. The learner's answers show that the learner had difficulty with comprehension of some of the questions. Question 2.2 requires the learner to answer as to the cause of the African farmer's settlement at K2 and Schroda. The learner provides an answer unconnected to the question. This could be ascribed to lack of knowledge but could also be due to lack of contextualized understanding the words "settle" and "settlement" which are words that are open to more than one interpretation. In figure 1.6 below learners are expected to read a short passage, understand it, and answer the questions below the passage. The question requires learners' knowledge of Zimbabwe Kingdom.

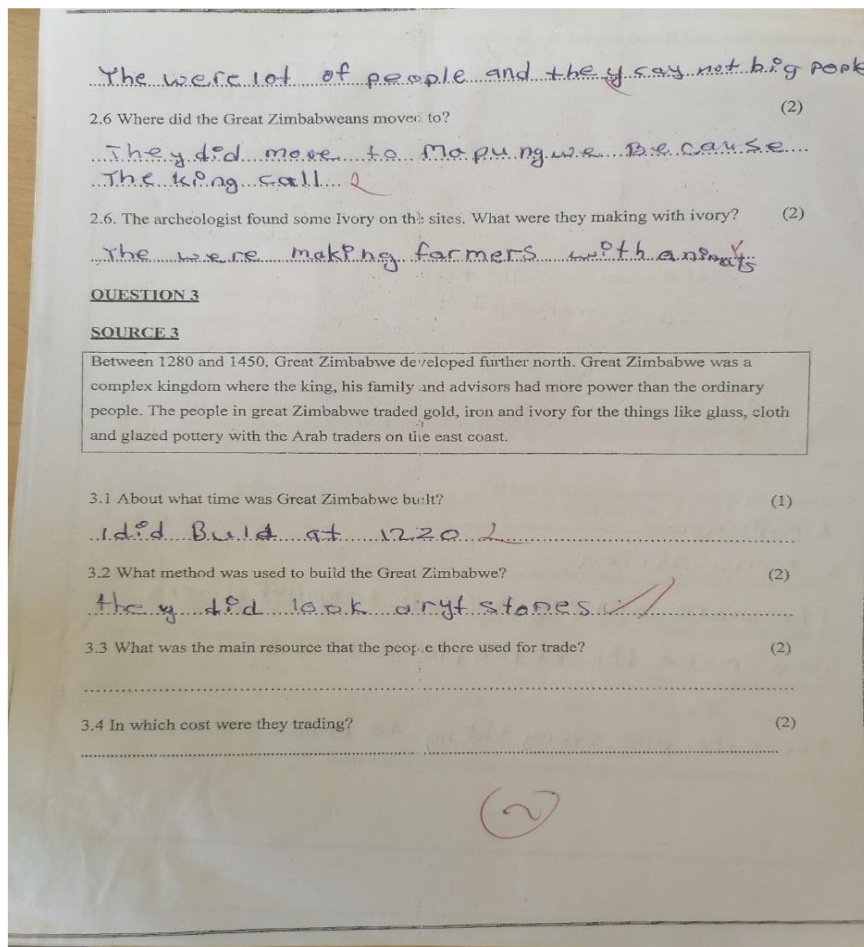


Figure 1.6: grade 6 learner's history assessment material.

The figure above depicts an extract from the questions and a learner's response. The questions require learners to use literal understanding and comprehension of the passage. The answer to question 2.6 reveals that the learner did not understand the question nor the reference to the word archaeologist. Further question 3.3 and 3.4 have been skipped and left blank which connects to learners' assertions in extract 1.3 line 6 and line 9, that when they do not understand a question, they skip it.

questions

Read through the article on your own and answer the questions that follow.

1.1. Where did Xolani go to School? (2)
in Mpumalanga

1.2. What did Xolani dream of becoming? (2)
dream of becoming a doctor

1.3. What prevented him from making his dream come true?(2)
He refused to give up and got a job as a till Parker as his local SPAR.

1.4. What did he do to make sure that his dream came true? (2)
but he just did not have the money to pursue his dreams.

1.5. Which University accepted him to study? (2)
Stellenbosch university

2.6. Did he get financial support from his family? Give three reasons mentioned in the article to support your answer. (3)
Not support his family but his single mother had support.

2.7. Who supported him through his life? (1)
his mother

2.8. What promise did he make to his Gogo? (2)
he would become a doctor.

2.9. Was his Gogo there to see him reach his dream? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
the gogo there to see him.

2.10. What did his Gogo call him through his life? (2)
the call him gogo was.

2.11. Write down one word from the article of something that Xolani had that helped him succeed? (2)

Marks: 20

52

4.1.2 Assessment challenge: slow pace of writing due to lack of understanding questions.

Extract			
14-04-2021	Grade 6 E	Social Science (Geography)	Assessment
On this day learners are writing a classroom assessment about trade imports and exports between South African and the world. The language of assessment is English. The teacher scaffolds the learners through the questions of the assessment. The teacher reads questions of the assessment to the learners in English. Learners are instructed to read aloud as a class. Teacher is reading aloud a question and checks learners understanding. I noticed that the pace of writing is slow when learners engage in assessments, and I thought of asking the teacher about this during the interview.			

Extract 1.8: field notes

In the interview, I asked the teacher about the practice of slow writing as well as the reason.

Extract 1.9: Teacher interview.

1. R: then apha classin kengoku uye udibane nentoyokuba abantwana babhale kancane, mhlawumbe? **(Have you come across children writing slow here in class? Maybe)** slow pacing of writing bangakhawulezisi **(not fast)**.
2. T2: Banintsi kebona. **(there are a lot of them)**
3. R: Inokuba unobangela yintoni mam? **(What could be the reason?)**
4. T2: Mmhm nam ndiyabhidwa ndidla ngokucingela ukuba inokba yi understanding, mhawumbi aba understandi. But uyakwazi ukubenza ba understande ngoku, okanye bafuna landelelwa. Andikho sure inokuba yintoni unobangela because ke umntu obekufanele ukuba uyacotha ngumntu onga understandiyo ukuba mhlawumbi into abe ecotha. Kengoku omnye acothe seleyazi into, mhlawumbi ba playful. **(I too am confused, I used to think it is the understanding, maybe they don't understand. But you can make them understand or they want to follow up on them. I am not sure what the cause is because the person who is supposed to be slow is someone who does not understand. Maybe that could be the reason of their slow writing. But the person becomes slow though they understand, I could say they are being playful)**.

KEY: R: Researcher, Teacher 2: T2

The teacher speculates that some learners are playful. Her comment that the pace may also be due to lack of understanding questions resonates with assertions made by the third teacher I interviewed as reflected in the extract below.

Extract 1.10: teacher 3 interview

T3: Bathatha kade **(They are slow to understand)** and they need more time on working on that and kuba xesha lilincinci **(little time)** and the worst part is that ixesha lincinci besiza ounge Time is not enough yet they attend ounge)! And umsebenzi funeka bawu coverishe over two weeks' time **(they must cover the work in two weeks)**. Lanto xesha labo **(their time)** is one weak in a month, uba bona **(them)** bona Kanye kule veki uphinde uba **(you again them)** bone kathathu **(three times)** next week yet kukhona msebenzi ekufuneka bawu (there is work they need to) cover in two weeks. So mna ndifumaniseka kuba xesha lincinci kule **(So I find**

less time in this) covid-19. There is not enough time ukuze ukuzinantsike eza (to use) map skills. Abakwazi kukhangela msebenzi ubanike ukuba mabakhangele into ethile, phaya like ilatitude. Kufumaneka ntoni, like ezanto. Kuyekufuneke ngoku iphepha selilapha uhambe uyoba bonisa kuze bafumane answer. (They can't understand map skills. They can't look for work related to maps; you ask to look for something like latitude, but they can't. You must show them on paper, for them to get the answer).

Key: T3=Teacher 39

The teacher posits that the reason learners' pace is slow when writing is due to lack of understanding questions and further suggests that it is 'triggered by the question itself'. Concepts are harder to process in a second language. Learners are probably engaged in translanguaging, (see also Paxton, 2009). In addition to her statement in line 7, Teacher 1 reveals that another factor could be that learners are not used to working alone, rather, they are used to collaborative learning. This factor in learners' engagement with assessments is a potential hindrance to learners successfully completing assessment and it compounds assessment challenges faced by multilingual learners.

That learners require more time to process concepts and to write in a second language is well documented (see for example Paxton 2009). What is significant in this context is that learners are required to move from extensive teacher and peer multilingual mediation for classroom assessment to text/examination conditions where no glossaries and dictionaries are made available, and no extra time is granted. As is evident in learners' scripts, this results in them mainly answering questions where the vocabulary is accessible, and the questions are literal/reorganization questions requiring them to retrieve basic, short, factual answers from the text rather than to demonstrate understanding and interpretation. It is significant that learners seldom answer comprehension questions in full sentences and are not required to do so.

4.2 Assessment incomprehension.

It was evident from both learners' assessment answers and from teachers' interviews that learners' often repeated questions. In the extracts below the teachers discuss how learners often reproduced the assessment questions instead of answering them.

4.2.1 Assessment incomprehension: learners write questions as answers part 1.

Extract 2.1: teacher 1 interview on assessment incomprehension, 10/05/2021

1. R: what do they find difficult in the assessment's mam?
2. T1: Maybe it is the way the questions are asked. Then some of them especially learners coming from other countries, they do not know what they are supposed to do, so they just copy the question as it is, and they rewrite the question instead of answering the question. So, if you do not tell them that this is a question, you supposed to write an answer, or you first ask them. Okay for example let's say I ask them what is renaissance? Then one of them will answer loud, that renaissance is this and that and then you don't say its correct or wrong, immediately you put a pause and then you say you can now write. Then it will come to their minds that okay, I am supposed to write the answer now.

KEY: R: Researcher, T1: Teacher 1

Extract 2.2: Teacher 3 interview on assessment incomprehension

1. R: Ewe

2. T2: Abo ke kunzima kubo abanye ke kubhetele kubo. Abakho betele ne, banye bakhuphela iquestion **(It is hard for some and better for some). (The learners are not better. Some learners just copy the question as it is)**. Instead of giving you the answer athathe ngoku bhala la question buyibuza. Athathe ngokuphinda abhale yona. **(The learners just write the question that is asked)**

3. R: mhm, xa uilandlelela baye bathini? **(When you follow on that, what do they say?)**

4. T2: xa uyilandlelela bane files zabo ezichaza meko zabo uyayiqonda. **(When you follow on the matter, the learners have files that details their conditions, for you to understand).**

5. R: oh okay.

KEY: R: Researcher, T2: Teacher 2

In extract 2.2 line 2, the teacher speculates that it could be that learners don't know what to do hence they copy questions. While there are several deficit assumptions about learner identity in the teacher's statements, there seems to be limited engagement with the move from heavily scaffolded classroom assessment practices to the high level of cognitive academic language proficiency skills (Cummins 2000) required in high-stakes monolingual formal assessments, produced in learners' second or third language. Testing research has shown that a test on content administered to a second language learner in the dominant language is unlikely to portray the full extent of what the pupil knows, because language proficiency will have an impact on the results (Menken 2010).

4.2.2 Assessment incomprehension: learners write questions as answers part 2.

2.3.2 Name the three hemispheres that each of the following continents is in: (3)

- a) Australasia - Western hemisphere ✓
b) North America - Northern hemisphere ✓
c) Asia - Eastern hemisphere ✓

Question 3

3.1 Explain the purpose of having scales on a map. (3)

Explain the purpose of having scales on a map
on other place. ✓

3.2. Use the diagram to answer the questions below it. (4)

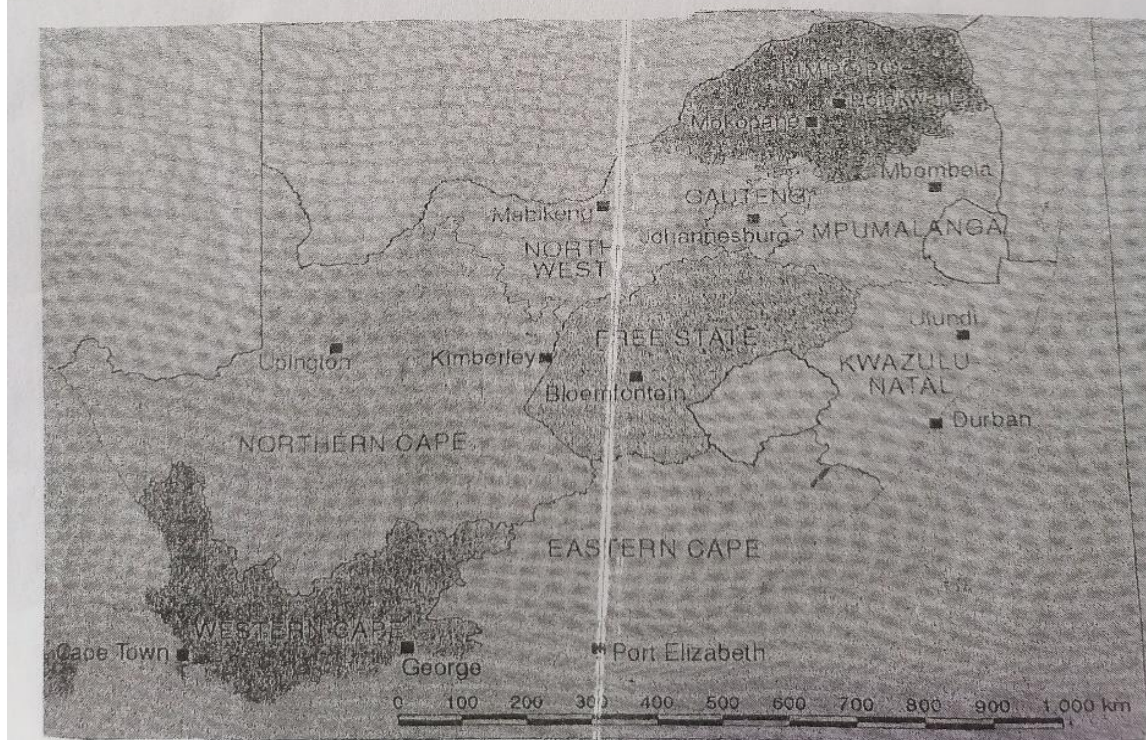


Figure 2.1: captured from grade 6 geography assessment.

2.3.2 Name the three hemispheres that each of the following continents is in: (3)

- a) Australasia - hemisph
b) North America - following
c) Asia - continents

Question 3

3.1 Explain the purpose of having scales on a map. (3)

.....
Used to find
.....

3.2. Use the diagram to answer the questions below it. (4)

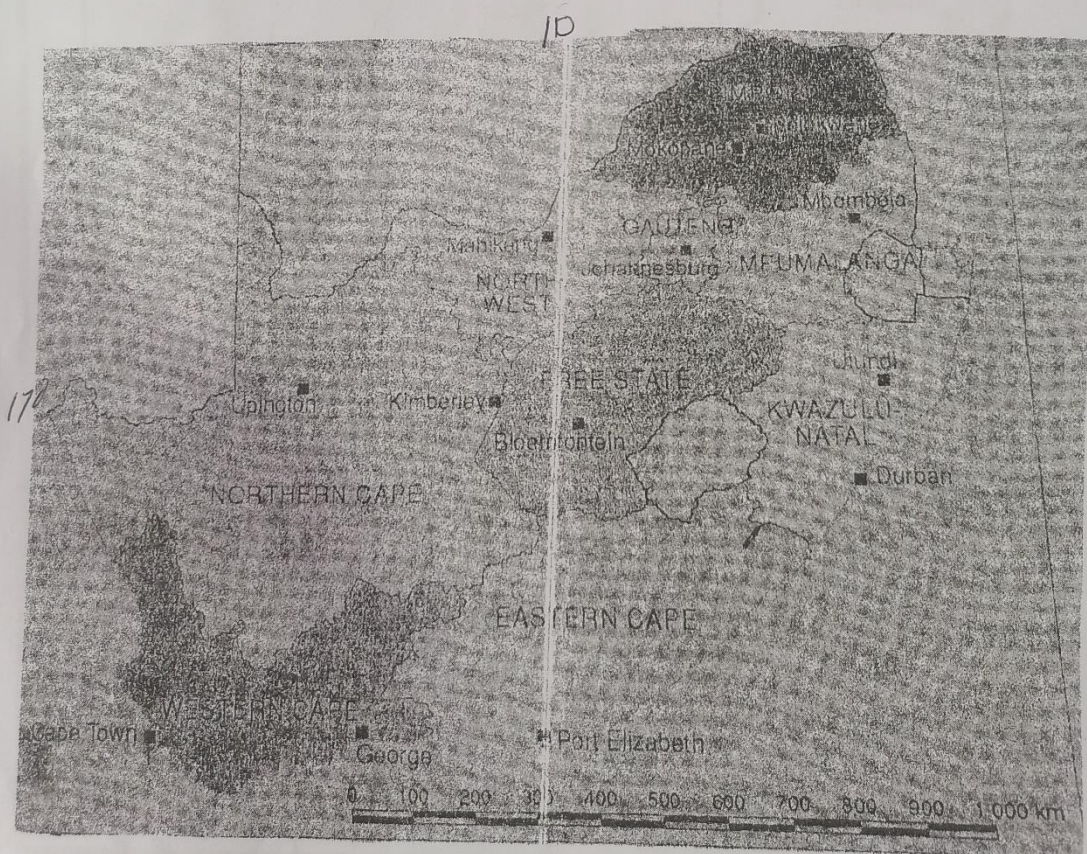


Figure 2.2: Grade 6 geography assessment

Okuboniweyo

umbuzo 2

Bukela lo mfanekiso ze uphendule imibuzo.



1. Ingaba apha kulo mfanekiso kuse zilalini okanye edolophini? (1)

umthali abaseyo kwindlela ye Baymel ngonyama

2. Bhala izivakalisi zibentlanu uxele izinto ozibonayo ezikubonisa ukuba yintlalo yase zilalini okanye edolophini. (5)

Ingaba apha kulo mfanekiso kuse zilalini okanye edolophini
khala izivakalisi zibentlanu uxele izinto ozibonayo ezikubonisa
yase zilalini okanye edolophini.
yamliye nase yemiye imyeli ye
qeshi mva.

3. Xela ngesivakalisi umthetho we Khorona oboniswa ngaba babantwana. (2)

ngesivakalisi umthetho we khorona oboniswa ngaba babantwana.

4. Xela ngesivakalisi inkangeleko yaba bantwana. Ingaba bonwabile? (2)

ngesivakalisi inkangeleko yaba bantwana.

0/10

Figure 2.3: Grade 6 isiXhosa HL assessment

Questions

Read through the article on your own and answer the questions that follow.

1.1. Where did Xolani go to School? (2)
Maurmaling School

1.2. What did Xolani dream of becoming? (2)
to be a doctor

1.3. What prevented him from making his dream come true? (2)
Because he did promise his granny that he was going to be a doctor

1.4. What did he do to make sure that his dream came true? (2)
What did he do to make sure that his

1.5. Which University accepted him to study? (2)
Which university accepted him to study

2.6. Did he get financial support from his family? Give three reasons mentioned in the article to support your answer. (3)
Did he get financial support from his family Give three reasons mentioned in the article to support answer

2.7. Who supported him through his life? (1)
Who supported him through his

2.8. What promise did he make to his Gogo? (2)
What promise did he make to his Gogo

2.9. Was his Gogo there to see him reach his dream? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
Was his Gogo there to see him

2.10. What did his Gogo call him through his life? (2)
him through his life

2.11. Write down one word from the article of something that Xolani had that helped him succeed? (2)
down one word from the article of something

Marks: 20

Figure 2.4: Grade 6 English FAL assessment

In figure 2.2 learners had to read and answer 2.3.2 by writing the name of the hemispheres located in three of the continents. However, the learner wrote the key words of the answer and name of hemisphere of each continent. In question 3 (below question 2.32) the learner is required to 'explain the purpose of having a scale'. Instead, the learner wrote question four as an answer to question three. The same is done by a different learner as represented in figure 2.1. In figure 2.3 the learner is assessed in his L1/home language, yet the learner has answered the list of questions by writing questions as answers such as in question 2. The learner writes question 1 and question 2 as an answer to question 2. It is clear and evident in figure 2.4 when

examining the assessment, that the learner does not understand the question required and has conceivably thought the answer is within part of the question.

In this regard, it could be argued that although the learner is an IsiXhosa L1/home language speaker the standardized IsiXhosa language is a language challenge to the learner. These language challenges are as a result of minimum exposure to the language of teaching and learning through the literacy practices of reading and writing. One of the language challenges experienced by multilingual learners is lack of writing with meaning, what Ker (2015) terms as pseudo writing. Pseudo writing is a written expression that lacks meaning. Such pseudo writing was exhibited by learners when responding to assessment questions (see figure 2.7 below). Assessments require learners to express themselves meaningfully on paper and display meaningful and easy to read responses to questions that require a recollection of information/content taught as well as comprehension and interpretation. However, in the segments of assessments depicted below, there is a mismatch between what the learners are expected to answer and what learners produce. This is what Blommaert (2002) describes as a pretextual gap.

4.2.3. Language challenge: Writing meaningful expression.

Questions

Read through the article on your own and answer the questions that follow.

1.1. Where did Xolani go to School? (2)
Mpumalanga

1.2. What did Xolani dream of becoming? (2)
Xolani he dream of becoming doctor

1.3. What prevented him from making his dream come true?(2)
Its because university they cannot take Xolani

1.4. What did he do to make sure that his dream came true? (2)
he going to Spar a tilbaker

1.5. Which University accepted him to study? (2)
Stellenbosch University

2.6. Did he get financial support from his family? Give three reasons mentioned in the article to support your answer. (3)
No
because Your father is passed way
and Your granny
and no money

2.7. Who supported him through his life? (1)
Your father

2.8. What promise did he make to his Gogo? (2)
he want to a Doctor

2.9. Was his Gogo there to see him reach his dream? Give a reason for your answer. (2)
because Your granny he want amoney
Yes

2.10. What did his Gogo call him through his life? (2)
granny called him doctor through his life

2.11. Write down one word from the article of something that Xolani had that helped him succeed? (2)
Your father he said cannot a Ford and send unives

Marks: 20
17

Figure: 2.6 Grade 6 English FAL assessment of learner comprehension.

The learners were expected to read the article and answer questions. Although the teacher has marked the learners' answers as correct, they lack meaning due to incorrect grammatical structures. This is evident in question 2.8, 2.9 and 2.11 in the figure above.

QUESTION 4

SOURCE: 3

Look at the picture below that remind us about the significance of Mapungubwe. Write a short paragraph of about 6-8 sentences explaining the significance of Mapungubwe. (6)



The is someone that is looking
with the people. And they look
sad and angry. They look like
they going to justice. They going
to fight with people. The
people that treat them very
sad and like a dog. They very
frited Because this is there country.

TOTAL: 40

GOOD LUCK!!!!!!!

Figure 2.7: grade 6 History assessment

The figure above depicts part of an assessment in which learners had to interpret an image and answer by expressing on paper the significance of Mapungubwe. The learner seems to have interpreted the image in disconnection from the article on Mapungubwe and from an understanding of the significance of Mapungubwe. This reflects both a lack of understanding of the assessment questions and assessment instructions. In the first sentence of the learner's written answer to 'source three', the learner focuses on the state of the people in the picture and not on the 'significance of Mapungubwe'. That the learner misunderstood the contextualized instruction, is

evident in how the learner explains the people in the picture, rather than describing the importance of the place called Mapungubwe. This is an example of a pretextual gap, a gap between what learners are expected to write and what they write (see Blommaert & Maryns, 2002). I argue that learner's pseudo writing and pretextual gap (writing an unexpected answer, unrelated to the assessment question) is caused by learner's lack of comprehension and limited language proficiency.

QUESTION 4
SOURCE: 3
Look at the picture below that remind us about the significance of Mapungubwe. Write a short paragraph of about 6-8 sentences explaining the significance of Mapungubwe. (6)



Mapungubwe they were lot of people.
The kings they we living in the ~~keal~~ ^{keal}.
With there in ~~actions~~ ^{actions} to have a power.
Kings and Queens there where buried there.
And the king that is alive it will buried there.
And her ~~Queen~~ ^{Queen} his wife.

① TOTAL: 40

GOOD LUCK!!!!!!!

Figure 2.8: Grade 6 history assessment transcript.

4.3 Teachers' notions of their support of multilingual learners.

It became crucial for this research study to understand teachers' notions of how they support multilingual learners during assessment practices.

Extract 3.1 is an extract of the teacher interview between teacher 1 and I where I had posed a question on how as a teacher, she supports multilingual learners.

4.3.1 Scaffolding- guided meaning making

Extract 3.1 Teacher interview, 10/05/2021

1. R: Okay Mam. How do you assist them to understand the content that you impart in them?
2. T1: It became a priority, or it is a priority, that I must first check the work that I gave them the previous day. To see if they understood the content because moving forward whilst others are still behind is not going to assist anything.
3. I need to move with their pace because not all of them, they will grasp everything like everyone else. Some of them they are very quick and very smart, some of the, they are very slow by nature. You need to understand each learner that is in your class so that you can understand their differences and there might be language barrier especially for learners that coming from other countries, some from Zimbabwe. Sometimes they don't understand anything in class. So, you need to move with their pace. May you get behind by two weeks or one week. So, it is not always too easy to finish the syllabus with them because of trying to accommodate everyone to ensure that they understand the content.
4. R: Okay. So, mam how to assist learners to understand assessments questions? When I came here, they were writing assessments right? How do you, since you have a multilingual class, some learners speak Afrikaans as a language, some speak Shona, some speak Xhosa and IsiZulu maybe.
5. R: How do you ensure that questions in the assessment posited in English, that each learner understands them?

6. T1: mmmm, okay what I do when they are writing assessments, if let's say there are three questions or 4 questions maybe, then the question! Let's say the question is out of thirty marks then I must make sure I read the question. I ask them do you understand this question? Then they will respond. I tell them this is how you going to answer. Wait for them to answer the question before you move to another. It can take two to three hours

Teacher 1 states that she is patient with learners and takes her time when educating learners. This is evident in line 2 in which she asserts that 'quality is more important than quantity because learner need to understand everything'. The teacher asserts in line 5 that her form of support is by reading questions for learners and guiding learners as to how to answer each question.

Teacher 3 was similarly asked about what immediate interventions she employs to enable learners to understand assessment questions.

Extract 3.3: teacher interview 3.

1. R: then assessments questions uyewenze njan ukuba uba ncede ukuba bayi understand? **(How do you help them understand?)**
2. T3: funeka uphinde uyifundile not bonke xah ubanike assessments. Ispecial ngoku izaba ngu June kuzabanzima because ba expecte into yokuba umfundi ekwazile uzfundela aziphendulele iquestions. But siyabafundela question siyachaze ukuba ithetha ukuthini and yintoni efunekayo. Kukho kwa aba kunzima kwakufunda. Ongoziwe abakwazi ukufunda, they can't read and abakwazi uyakwazi ukubhala ke because uyayikhuphela into ephepheni. But ukufunda akazukwazi akazi. **(You have to read it again but not all of them require that when writing assessments. Especially now that it will be June, it is difficult because it is expected that a learner must be able to read and answer questions. But we read for them and explain what it means and what it requires. There are learners who encounter challenges of reading. Ongeziwe and the rest, can't read. S/he can write because s/he can copy the paper).**
3. R: so uye uyifunde ngoluphi ulwimi? **(You read it in what language?)**

T3: funeka uyifunde le (you must read the) question and the unantsike, ukuze bayive bayi **(do it so that they) understand** but sometimes bangayi (they don't) understand ukuba ithiwani **(what it states)**. Mele phinde explaine ngesiXhosa ukuba kuthiwa yithi. Funeke wenze explanations throught bebhala. **(You explain again in Xhosa what it is stated, you then must do explanations throughout whilst they are writing).**

R: Researcher, T3: Teacher 3

In line 2, T3 emphasises that repeated reading of the assessment question is key to assisting learners to comprehend the assessment. One of the ways of helping learners to understand assessment questions is to read the question and explain what it means and requires and that is done throughout the assessment practice. The teacher shows awareness that such assistance has negative consequences for learners during formal (summative) assessment, as stated in line 2.

It is important to note that during the process of writing assessments, learners are expected to work independently. However, the learners are used to explanation of questions and guidance on how to answer assessment questions. This is evident in the extract below where the teacher says that she explains assessments throughout only during formative assessments but that stops when it is time for summative assessments. In addition, one of the strategic ways of assisting learners that Teacher 3 commits to is to set similar class assessment questions to the upcoming formal assessment, to aid learners' understanding.

Extract 3.4: Teacher 3 interview,

1. R: so uyaba explainela through xah bebhala? **(So, do you explain to them throughout their writing?)**
2. T3: ndiba explainela throughout.especially xa iyi **(I explain throughout especially when it is)**. Assessments ingeyo test **(it is not tests)**. Only xa iyi test **(only when it is)**, kuba xa iyi **(because when it is)** June exam ne final exam, siye si swap ititshala kungabikho wena eclassin **uyaqonda (I swap with the other teacher, because I must not be in class)**.that is why funeka uba preparishe **(that is why you must prepare)** for imibuzo ezophuma kwi **(questions that will come out)** exam ubenzise **(use)** similar questions ubanike ukuba maabayo funda imibuzo ngalandlela izobuzwa ngayo kwi exam. **(Give them to go and study those questions in the way they will come out in the exam)**.
3. T3: ukuze bakwazi uku grasper otherwise kuba nzima ubuzobona ukuba ubuzoba lapha. **(For them to be able to grasp otherwise it becomes difficult, you would have seen if you were able to stay here longer)**. I assessment mark lena **(this one)** ka March ayifani neka **(It is different from) June**. Yehla ka khulu imark yabo ngo June **(the mark of June really plummets)**. Kuyabinakala ukuba si strugglishile **(it shows that we have struggled)**. Kuba **(because)** exam instructors they don't go through the whole paper, the just read the instruction and the questions and they must go on their own.

KEY: R: Researcher, T3: Teacher 3

As previously highlighted, the discrepancy between teachers' translanguaging classroom practices and the lack of support for learners in formal assessments is highly significant and is a problem that teachers are aware of but feel unable to change because of policy constraints.

4.3.2 Supporting multilingual learners- translation.

In trying to understand how learners experience monolingual assessments and their successful completion or not, of the assessments, I was interested to understand

how learners were supported during assessment practices and what made it easy for them to complete assessments (line 1).

Below is a learner's account of the use of translation in illuminating meaning to learners.

In line 2 of extract 3.5 (group interview), one of the learners in the focus group explains that they do not understand English language. However, they do understand when English is translated to IsiXhosa. When teachers were interviewed on how they facilitate meaning when learners do not understand assessment content, teacher 2 explains below about translating to facilitate learners understanding.

T2: Ku reader questions only asinayo enye Ndlela. The aba bane problem siba readela iquestions zalonto ibhalwayo. Then the same question funeka uyenze in Xhosa.Ekwenzele umntwana ayi understandeh. Then kengoku ukuba ubhale ntoni, wabhala erongo wabhala eright, ayikho enye indlela esinokwenza ngayo. **(It is to read questions only, we don't have another method, and we read questions to the learners experiencing problems. The same question you must read in Xhosa, for the child to understand. Then now what they write, whether right or wrong, that is on them).**

Extract 3.5: group interview 1,

1. R: yinton leh Ibalula kwi assessments about language? **(What is that makes assessment be easy when using language?)**
2. M: Ngokuba kwi English simane understandi kant IsiXhosa yi language yethu. Siyakwazi kuba into xayi into ithethwe English singa understandi then xha iyeh yathethwa nge si Xhosa siyi understand. **(In English there are time we may not understand but Xhosa is our language. We can sometimes not understand something that is said in English but understand it when it is said in Xhosa we understand.)**

R: alright, ndike ndafika phaya mis wenu efunda into ngesilungu aphinde ayitolike ngesixhosa. Iyawenza mehluko lonto. **(alright, I arrived there, and your teacher was reading something in English and again she translates it in Xhosa)**

3. L: Uyawenza. **(She does).**
4. R: Umzekelo uye afunde, aye afunde I activity nge silungu neh, abesenichazisela ngesi Xhosa. **(For example she reads from an activity in English right? The she explains in Xhosa?)**
5. R: niye niyi understand neh? **(Do you then understand?)**
6. M: Uye achaze ngazo zombini language. **(S/he explains using two languages).**
7. R: Kwi assessment kukhona kuba anifundele nge English aphinde anichazisele ngesi Xhosa. **(During the assessment does it happen, that the teacher explains in English and in Xhosa?)**

8. L: Uyasichazisela nge English xa abanye be ngaunderstandi uye acacise ngesixhosa. **(S/he explains in English and then when others do not understand she explains in Xhosa).**
9. M: Acacise ngesiXhosa **(explains using Xhosa).**

KEY: R: Researcher, L: Lady: M: Mpumi, C: China

The pedagogic strategy used by teachers to impact learning, emerges during the writing of assessments, such as classroom activities, which form part of the language and literacy practices that I present and analyze below.

4.4 Language and literacy practices.

Language and literacy practices cannot be separated. Language is the medium of literacy practices. While monolingual language and literacy assessment practices were dominant in the multilingual classrooms that I observed, the use of named languages in the three grade 6 classrooms, differed. Translanguaging was used in two of the three grade 6 classrooms that I observed during the data collection period, with a strict English monolingual practice in the third class. Below I discuss the language and literacy practices observed, as well as the learners' experiences of such practices in three grade 6 classrooms.

4.4.1 Learners' experiences of translanguaging as a language practice in the classroom.

Below, I describe how learners described typical translanguaging practices from the two classes in which this practice was common as teachers mediated informal assessments.

Extract 3.6: Learner interview

1. R: IsiXhosa, nisebenzisa Xah kutheni kwi Social sciences? (**When do you use Xhosa in social sciences?**)
2. X: mhlawumbi xah. (**Maybe when**).
3. V: Xa etranslator umisi. (**When the teacher translates**).
4. X: umisi efuna cacisa asicacisele ngesiXhosa. (**When the teacher explains, s/he explains using Xhosa**).
5. V: Maybe nzathi ligama ubungalazi akucacisele umisi nge English aphinde akucacisele nge English. (Maybe I will say you don't understand a word then the teacher will explain in Xhosa and then explain in English).
6. X: ngesi Xhosa (by Xhosa)
7. R: Okay.
8. R: So I assessments zeh social sciences zi presentwa ngeyphi language? (Social sciences assessments are presented in what languages?)
9. V: nge English' (in English).
- 10.
11. R: Xah unga understandi? (When you do not understand?).
12. Z+X: ucaciselwa ngesiXhosa. (You get an explanation in IsiXhosa).
13. R: Ngubani? (By Whom?)
14. X: ngumisi (**it is teacher**).

KEY: R: Researcher, X: Xola, V: Vivi: Z: Zama

The teacher as described by learners in line 3 and line 4 uses both Xhosa and English to drive meaning and s/he is cited by learners as using their home language when translanguaging from English to impart content knowledge. However, Xhosa is used as a supporting language, as confirmed when V states:

“V: Maybe nzathi ligama ubungalazi akucacisele umisi nge English aphinde akucacisele nge English. **(Maybe I will say you don’t understand a word then the teacher will explain in Xhosa and then explain again in English)**”.

The learners in extract 3.6 reveal how, despite that fact that the language of assessment is monolingual on paper, the reading and explanation of assessment questions (Line 7 to line 11) is done in both languages, Xhosa, and English. The aforementioned languages are used as the means of unveiling meaning and are inclusive of learners’ bilingualism. Yet, there is a mismatch in the languages of teaching and the language of assessment because the language of teaching is bilingual, yet the language of assessment is monolingual

I became interested in how learners for whom English an additional language, who were learning English as home language at school, communicated in the classroom. The learners in the interview extract below are taught English as a home language and therefore their LOLT is English the extract captures the reality of multilingual learners who translanguage when they communicate with each other.

Extract 3.7 Group 4 learner interview

1. R: So since you speak more than two languages. Do you happen to use those languages when you are communicating?
2. A: yeah
3. R: Like mix isiXhosa and English, mix English and Isixhosa, and English and Afrikaans
4. A: No I mix Afrikaans and Xhosa 5. R: you mix Afrikaans and Xhosa. 6. L: I mix English and IsiXhosa
7. R: In the classroom?
8. L: in the classroom yes.
9. A: I and he like to mix Afrikaans and Xhosa.
10. R: Oh okay.
11. L: I also mix Afrikaans, Xhosa, and English in the class.
12. R: So, you mix them?
13. L: yes
14. R: when communicating and discussing classwork? A: yes'
15. L: yes
16. Y: yes
17. R: okay.

KEY: R: Researcher, Y: Yamnkela, A: Abel, L: Leticia

Notwithstanding the monolingual practices in the English HL classroom, the learners assert that they bring in their linguistic repertoires during learner interaction in the classroom. They achieve this by translanguaging, even though they are required to engage with assessment content monolingually. The above data set reveals that learners converse bi/multilingually in the classroom, employing their vast and varied languages, in this context, languages predominantly being Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. This is what Margie Probyn (2012) calls 'smuggling in the vernacular'. The practice was observable when the teacher prescribed an activity and learners discussed the activity, shared answers, and explanations by using their linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, learners recognize the affordance of their languages. As Garcia, 2009 and Garcia and Wei 2014) argue, tranlanguaging has the potential to facilitate comprehension.

4.4.1.2 Linguistic repertoire: learners' invented spelling.

In this section, I discuss typical examples from learners' written assessments to show how learners transfer knowledge from home languages and work on the basis of spoken language, as is evident from their invented spelling.

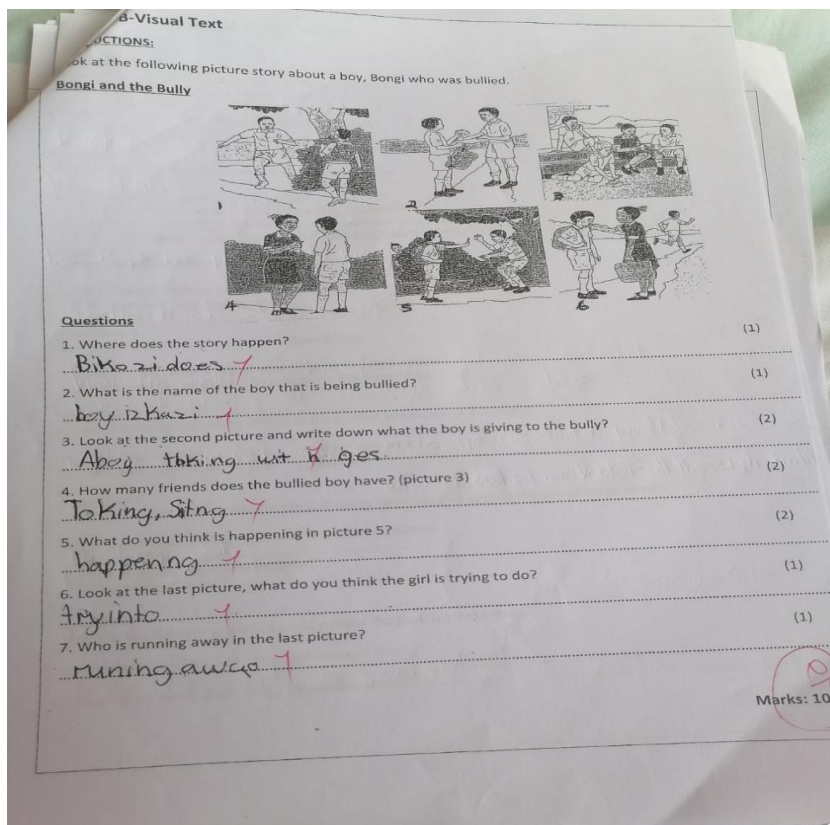


Figure 3.1 representation of learners invented spelling.

The above figure 3.1 illustrates an English FAL assessment in which learners were required to study a picture story and answer questions about the events in the picture. The picture story is about bullying and focuses on the language structures and conventions. This part of the assessment consists of seven questions. The learner answered all questions but unfortunately his answers were incorrect as indicated by the teacher's correction marks. All answers to the questions by the learner are incomplete. The invented spelling, as represented in the above extract, is significant. Examples are "Bikozi" for "because" in question 1 and "toking" for "talking" in question 1 and question 3. Below I cite examples of a different learners' invented spelling.

1.1 Name one item that the archeologist found in these settlements that have been there for long periods of time. (2)
 they found the stoun

1.2 What is the meaning of the word "archeologist"? (2)
 is the bouns meaning

1.3 According to the article, in what year did the Kingdom of Mapungubwe start? (2)
 her people has has elot

1.4 In which part of Africa was Mapungubwe? (2)
 ye Bikosi the Name her wasi son

1.5 What does the word Mapungubwe mean in English? (2)
 Jackals

1.6 The Kings of Mapungubwe lived in a certain area of Mapungubwe and the rest of the people lived in other areas. For each of the following areas, say where the 'Kings and royalty' and the 'Rest of the people' lived. (3)

1.6.1 The king.
~~the in the hill~~ on top of the hill

1.6.2 The Royal family.
 Down

1.6.3 The Rest of the people.
 they start to the sistasi

1.7 Explain the reason for these people living on top of the Hill. (2)
 the living top of hill Bikosi
 the wasi king

(2)

Figure 3.2 history assessment question on learner invented spelling.

Figure 2.1 depicts part of a monolingual Social Science assessment material/script. Learners were answering questions with reference to a short story about the people of Mapungubwe, their traditional settlements and practices. When done reading the short passage, the learners had to answer the questions which are reflected in figure 1.2. Upon capturing and analyzing the history assessment question paper, I realized that a few of the learner's answers to questions contained irregular grammar though they made sense when read. In question 1.1 of the above figure the learner is instructed to name one thing archaeologists found in the settlements.

The learner answers 'they found a stown'. Arguably the learner wanted to write stone but did not know or had forgotten the proper spelling for the word stone. In this case, the learner writes the way s/he pronounces the word.

Furthermore question 1.2 required the learner to write the meaning of the word Archeologist. The invented spelling by the learner is evident in 'is the bowns meaning' which presumably means 'bones. Question 1.4 requires the learners to name where Mapungubwe is located. The learner responded by writing 'Ye **Bikozi** the name her **whasi** sown'. The words highlighted in bold are examples of the learners invented spelling (see Blommaert, 2005a). The learners wrote "bikhosi" instead of because and "whasi" for was and "sistasi" for sisters. When the invented spellings are read in a full sentence, they may contain meaning despite the incorrect spelling. It is worth noting that the whole section of figure 3.2 is filled with spelling irregularities. This could contestably be due to the way in which words are pronounced and spelled in the learners' IsiXhosa home language. IsiXhosa is a tonal language. In the IsiXhosa language words are spelled in the manner in which they are pronounced, the sound of the word representing the letter of the vowel. The examples of learners' invented spellings form part the concept of how learners' transfer knowledge from home languages to English and working on the basis of spoken language, which reflects their multilingualism. Scholars in the US such as García (2009) and Gutiérrez (2008), contend that one language can complement another language and sometimes be fused together in the same text. This is achieved by the learner drawing from his or her linguistic repertoire.

4.4.1.2.1 Linguistic repertoire – learner's home language linguistic features.

The grade 6 English FAL class was dominated by multilingual learners' whose linguistic repertoires were often silenced in the classroom, because they were deemed by teachers as interrupting the standard language of teaching and learning. Whereas monolingual learners are usually allowed the full use of their linguistic repertoire in assessment and in learning, bilinguals are seldom permitted to do so, thus keeping them silent and unengaged in teaching and assessment activities. In one event as presented below, the teacher had been teaching learners adjectives and a learner who speaks Afrikaans as a home language but who was placed in an English HL class asked the teacher a question using IsiXhosa language, the learner's third language. The Afrikaans home language learner speaking IsiXhosa language to an IsiXhosa home language teacher in a classroom deemed monolingual, captured my attention

because what the learner effectively defied monolingualism in the classroom and utilized his language repertoire.

Extract 3.8: Field notes

06-04-2021	Grade 6 D	History	Activity People journey on food
Classroom linguistic demographics: IsiXhosa, English, Afrikaans speaking learners.			
The teacher proceeds to explain the evaluative criteria and further stimulates learner's prior knowledge. The language of instruction is strictly English. An Afrikaans HL, colored learner asks using IsiXhosa 'ngubani ixesha' (what is the time)? Teacher marks learner's answers to the classwork activity.			

The learner's question ('Teacher ngubani xesha') coupled with a pointing of his finger at his wrist as a sign of asking the time is indicative of the learner's linguistic repertoire. It indicates that the learner is comfortable in a multilingual setting of learners who speak Xhosa, Afrikaans, and English language interchangeably. This incident reflects how learners are not necessarily making the same language boundary decisions that the teachers make (see Makalela, 2015; Busch 2010).

Bhala isigxeko-ncomo sencwadi okhe wayifunda. Landela isikhokelo esingezantsi.

Isihloko: _____

Umpapashi nomhla wopapasho: Guy Bon B Sinxo

Indawo eliqhubeka kuyo ibali: Esitalini eGqece

Umhla: _____

Abalinganiswa: U Mnumzana Ntobeko ne Nkosikazi yakhe Ntosi

Isishwankathelo sebali: U Mnumzana Ntobeko kwaye ne Nkosikazi yakhe bahleli ngaphantsi kwesihlahla kuyabonakala ukuba kunho umntu bamlondolo.

Izinto endizithandileyo kule ncwadi: Ndithanda indlela ibaliso ngayo kwaye bagaliso ngokuchaza abalinganiswa abazalwa ibali bote babaliso nokuba umzi onani loo- ilonto ndizithandileyo.

Imfundiso yebali: Ndithanda ukuba ^{xa} uma uxazimisela ngomsebenzi wesihlahla uzakuphumelela

Izimvo ngebali: Kwinkala kakuhle kwaye nam ndifuna kuba ngulo isikhokelozi uhlalayo

ifutlayo

Figure 3.3 Xhosa home language worksheet

Similarly, in a grade 6 IsiXhosa Home language classroom, there was a learner who was learning IsiXhosa as a home language, but IsiXhosa is not her home language. The learner's home language is IsiZulu, and she had just moved into an area dominated by Afrikaans and IsiXhosa speakers. When communicating orally and in writing, the learner would mix IsiZulu and IsiXhosa. Her IsiXhosa carries linguistic features of IsiZulu language registers. During group interviews, I asked if the learner mixes IsiZulu and IsiXhosa. She confirmed that this is the case, and it is because she visits her home in KwaZulu Natal during school holidays where she speaks IsiZulu and thereafter comes back when schools open to speak IsiXhosa as a home language where she currently lives. In the above figure 3.3, the learner wrote a IsiXhosa book review by answering assessment guiding questions. The learners were guided on how to answer the assessment. The red marked words are IsiZulu linguistic features. For example, the learner writes the characters of the story as "Mnumzana Ntobeko ne Nkosikazi yakhe bahleli phantsi kwesihlahla" (**Mr Ntobekho and his wife sitting under the tree**). "Mnumzana" is an IsiZulu register for "Sir", the correct IsiXhosa word for "Sir" is "Mhleakazi" and "Isihlahla" (tree) is an IsiZulu word for a "tree", the correct IsiXhosa word is "Umthi" (tree). These are written instances of translanguageing.

Furthermore, another instance of a IsiZulu language feature (insertion of IsiZulu registers and speech) is when the learner writes “ume” (if) in IsiZulu instead of “Xa” (if) in IsiXhosa, and this is evident when the teacher corrects the learner, creating a boundary/insulation between the registers of the two languages. Nonetheless the learner’s written expression indicates the fluidity of languages (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010) and is reflective of the communicative practice of the learner and many other multilingual learners who use their linguistic repertoire to create meaning.

It is apparent from the extract below that the linguistic repertoire of learners in language teaching often becomes problematized and in the sense that it is marked as a disturbance to teaching of pure language. For instance, in figure 3.4 depicted below, a grade 6 multilingual learner borrows language registers from her IsiZulu language during the assessment, teaching and learning of languages. This prompts the teacher by substitute it with IsiXhosa.

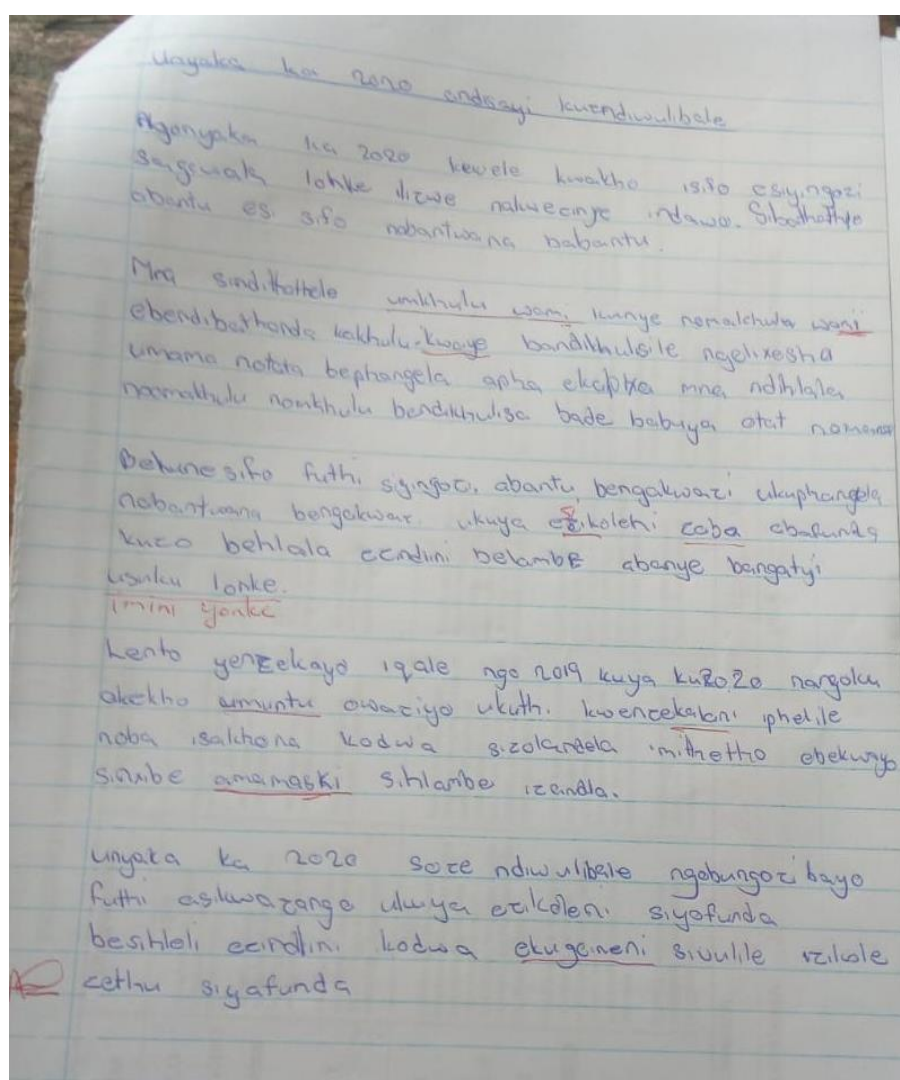


Figure 3.4: Depiction of an IsiXhosa home language essay.

Figure 3.4 below represents an IsiXhosa assessment in the form of an essay. The learners were instructed to write about a year they would not forget. When looking at the first line of the second paragraph, in which the learner writes “Mina sendithathele Umkhulu wam kunye nomakhulu Wamni (“Me, it has taken my grandfather and my grandmother”), it is evident that the sentence, contains IsiXhosa and IsiZulu registers included in the sentence by the IsiZulu speaking learner. The learner uses IsiZulu “mina” (me) instead of IsiXhosa “Mna” (me), Umkhuluwami (grandfather) instead of Utatomkhuluwam (grandfather) and the word “Wami” (mine) instead of “wam” (mine). Further down in paragraph 3 of the essay, the teacher underlined more Zulu words, being “Eikoleni” instead of ezikolweni (schools), and “usuku lonke” rather than “mini yonke” (all day). In paragraph 4 and 5 the learner writes “Kwenzekalani” (what happened) instead of “Kwenzekani”, “Umuntu” (person) rather than “Umntu” (person) and “Ekugcineni” (at the end) instead of “Ekugqibeleni” (at the end). These are varied linguistic features that reveal the linguistic repertoire of the multilingual learner. Though the learner has included unwanted Zulu registers in the IsiXhosa essay, the essay is not without meaning. However, the IsiZulu registers are marked with red ink by the teacher because they arguably interfere with the language learning of Xhosa as a home language. This reflects the way in which languages are conceptualized as bounded entities (Makalela, 2015) and a traditional language teaching practice that holds languages apart to avoid corruption of the pure form of the language (García, 2009a; Makalela, 2015). The latter conceptualization of languages is problematic as it prompts teachers to focus on the form of language rather than on comprehension and meaning making.

4.4.1 Literacy practices- Drafting assessments

Below I present and discuss literacy practice of drafting assessments.

Extract 3.9: Drafting assessments

1. R: so, their spelling of words, how do you correct them, in the writing assessments, because language is built from correct wording?
2. T1: We first give them the first draft and then give them second draft when they are writing they first give you their draft and then you correct all the spellings and then you give them again. And say this! Now you are writing your final draft. Then they will see where they have made mistakes and they will correct all those things
3. R: so that is when they are writing comprehensions?
4. T1: Yes (smiles)
5. R: Okay.
6. T1: That actually helps a lot

KEY: R: Researcher, T1: Teacher 1

Before learners wrote the actual assessments, teachers would first revise the assessment minutes before the formal assessment. The teacher would read the assessment question paper, helping learners with language structures and conventions and how to answer assessment questions. This literacy practice entailed the following: learners are given a first draft (line 2) followed by a second draft. When learners have finished writing the first draft, the teacher corrects all spelling errors (line 2). After the first and second draft is corrected, it is handed back to learners and they are told to write their final draft. Learners will see where and how they have made mistakes, and according to the teachers, this helped learners a lot (line 6).

Extract 3.10: Field notes on reading practice.

07-04-2021	Grade 6	Reading and viewing in IsiXhosa.	IsiXhosa
Learner is picked among learners in the classroom, to read whilst positioned In front of the classroom. When the learner is done reading the prescribed part of the story. The teacher proceeds to read and asks the learners to tag along and follow suit. Resource: Ukhanyo, Incwadi yabafundi, ibanga 6.			

Extract 3.10 details random selection of learners followed by whole class reading, prompted by the teacher's instruction for learners to read after she read. After the learners

finished reading, the teacher took over, decoded, and explained what was being read in IsiXhosa. What followed later was choral reading as a literacy practice and it featured learners emulating what and how the teacher read, reading from the Xhosa home language learner book. After being exposed to learners' reading activity, I observed the learners in the process of writing and captured examples of their writing as described below.

4.4.2 Literacy practice: Diary and letter writing.

One of the monolingual literacy practices in the multilingual classroom was writing diaries about a social event in learner's lives and optionally writing a letter to their friends, fellow classmates, and immediate relatives. What follows are examples of literacy practices in the form of letters and diaries written by grade

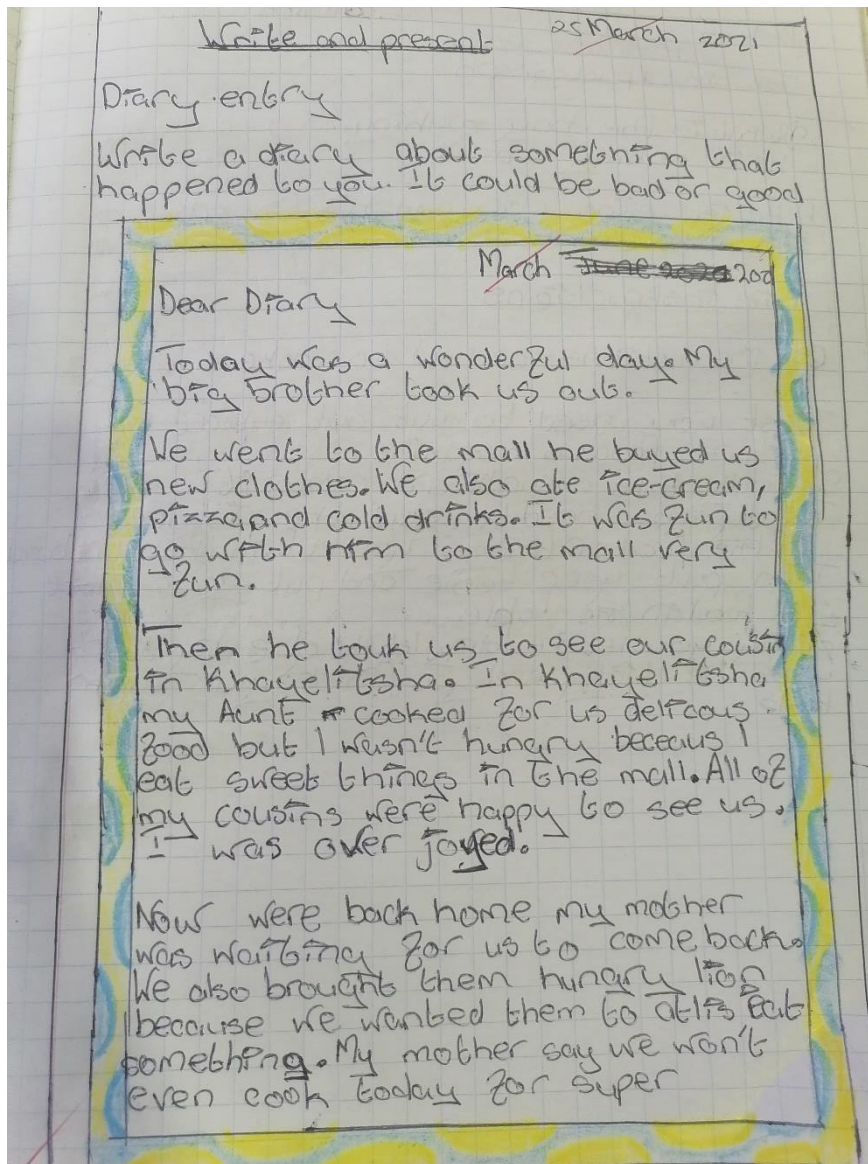


Figure 3.5 Diary entry

The learners are required to write in one language, English and to meet the expectations of the assessment (which is an in-class activity). The diary of the learner is a recording of a past event. It is evident from the above that the learner has grasped the literacy practice of diary-writing. The entry describes a series of personal events in sequential narrative form and uses appropriate register, drawing on adjectives and adverbs to reflect on cause and effect and on the emotions associated with a good day. While there are grammatical errors, these do not obscure meaning.

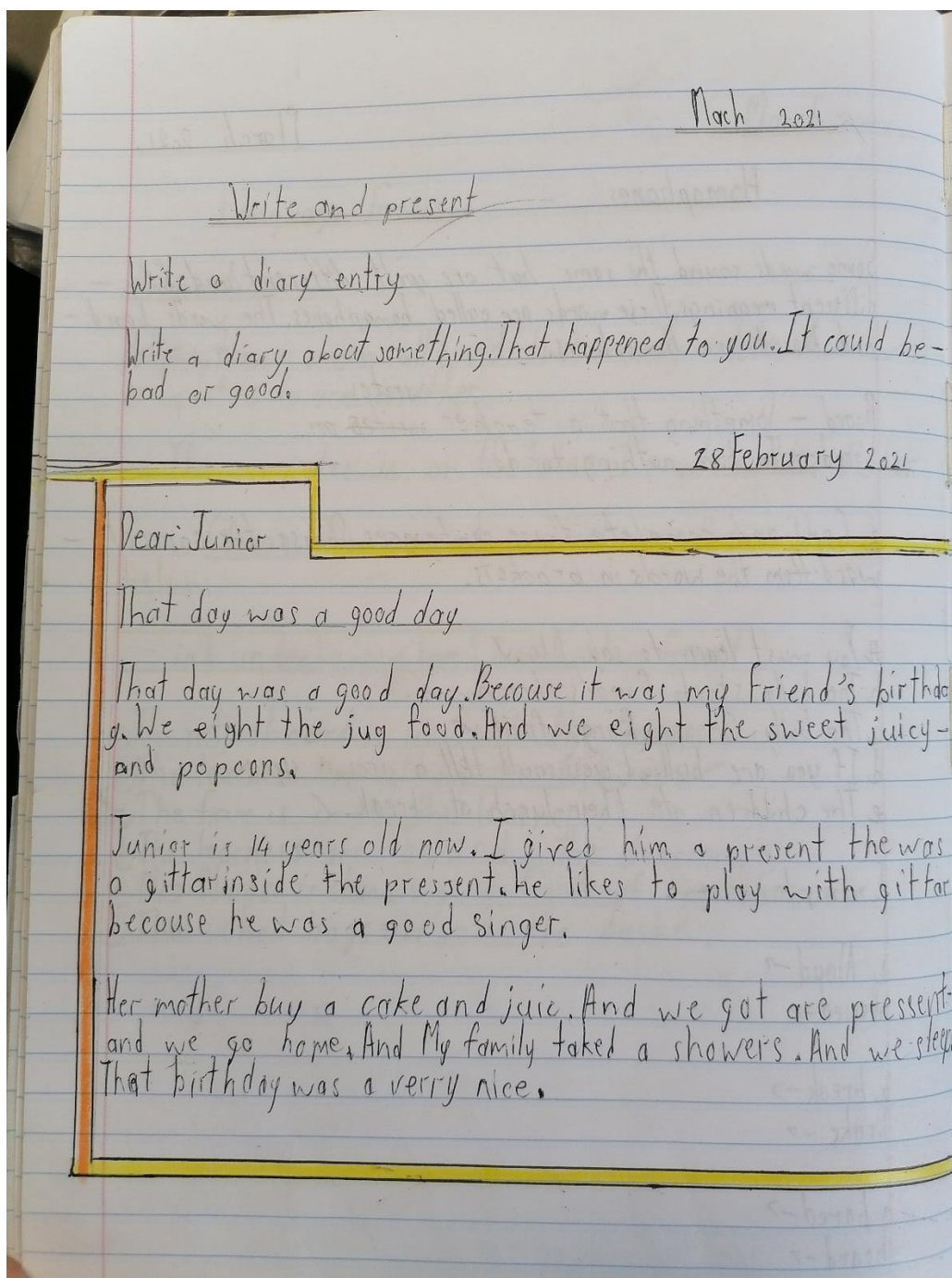


Figure 3.6 grade 6 learner diary entry.

Like figure 3.5 the diary has many errors of spelling and grammar. For example in paragraph 1 line 2, the learner writes "we eight jug food" instead of "we ate the juicy food". The learner mistakes the word "ate" (past tense) for eating food with the number "eight". One of the misspellings is "gitter" for "guitar" (music instrument) and this is located in a grammatically incorrect sentence "I gived him a present the was a gitter inside the 85abelle". That alone does not limit the meaning and intent it carries, which is to describe and reflect on a past social event.

4.4.2.2 Writing a letter.

One of the subsequent activities prescribed by the teacher was writing a letter and learners were taught how to write an informal letter, addressed to an immediate relative.

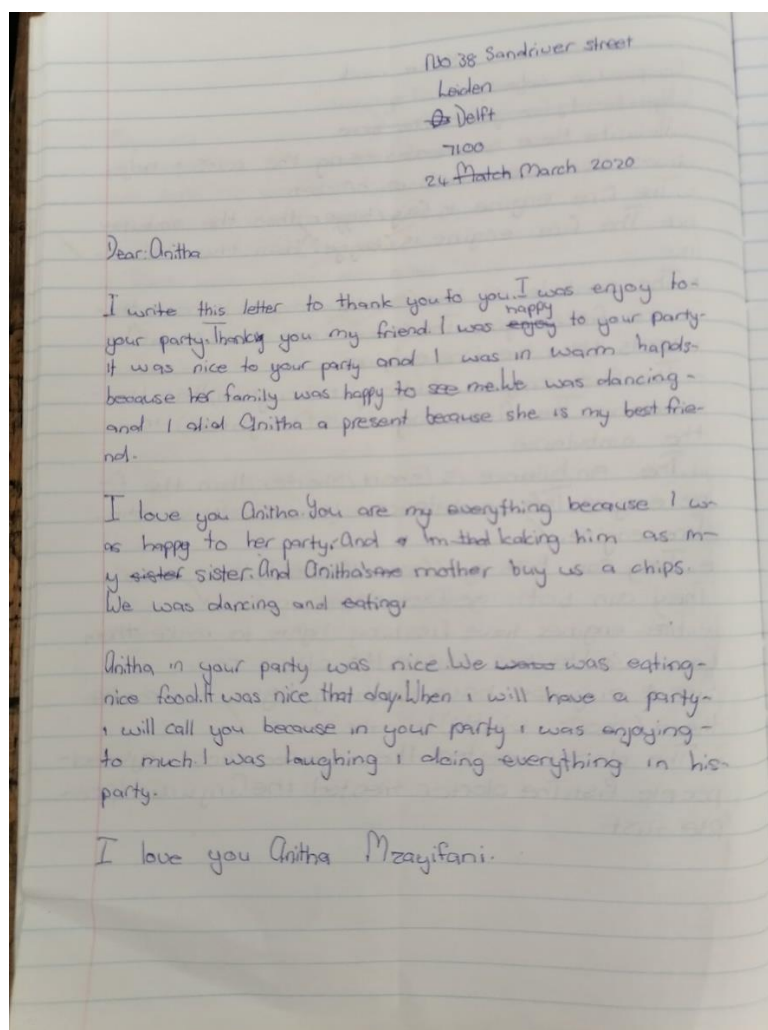


Figure 3.7 Letter written by a multilingual grade 6 learner.

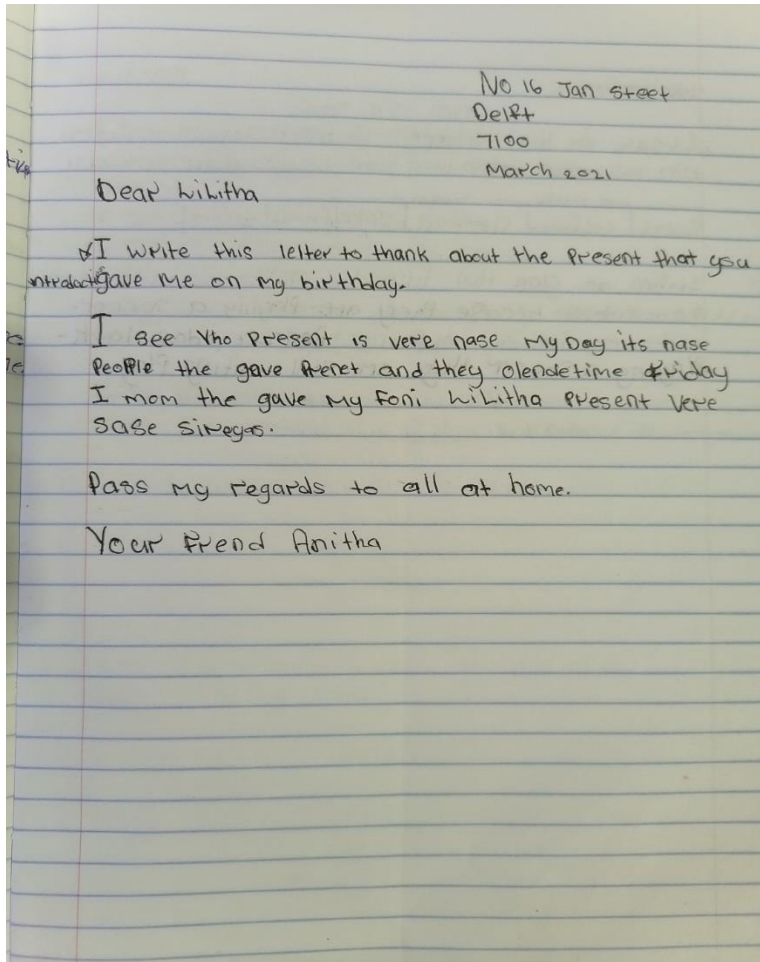


Figure 3.8 Letter written by a multilingual grade 6 learner.

The letter contains learner invented spelling especially in the second paragraph. The learner wrote

"I see yho present is vere nase my day its **nase** people the gave prent and they olende time Friday.

I mom the gave my foni Lilitha present vere sase sireyas".

The highlighted words are example of invented spellings. "Yo" for "your", "vere" for "very", "nase" for "nice" and "sireyas" for "serious". However, the misspellings of words do not suppress meaning in the letter and do does not limit the purpose of the letter, which is to inform. This literacy practice reflects the learner's multilingual ability.

4.5 Language and assessment resources in the classroom

In this section I discuss the language resources available and utilized by grade 6 multilingual learners. Below I present and discuss data that reveal teachers use of dictionaries as language resources to facilitate meaning.

4.5.1 Learners' conceptions of their teacher as a language and assessment resource and meaning facilitator.

At the beginning of the chapter, I described how learners relied on the teacher for definition of words and how to answer an activity. Below, I present evidence of how a teacher is valued by the learners and how learners value their fellow learners as language resources.

Extract 4.1: learner interview

R: So, when you do not understand the word, what do you do?

Q: I must ask the teacher.

R: Andrew what do you do?

A: I ask the teacher, or I ask her or the girl sitting behind me.

R: What makes the assessments to be easier? Because I can see that you have minimum challenges.

Q: when we study about what we are going to write

R: What makes the assessment easy, is it because the words written you understand them or does the teacher have to explain the words.

Q: when teacher explains it, then it makes it easy

KEY: R: Researcher, Q:Qiqi, A: Akhumzi

It is evident from the extract above that the teacher is regarded as language support. The learners ask teachers (line 3 and 4) when they face challenges with assessment materials during assessment practices. Human support was prevalent during classroom assessment practices but not during summative (examination) assessments. Not only do the learners ask assistance from teachers, but they also source assistance from each other as learners (line 4).

Extract 4.2: Learner interview

1. R: Zeziphi resources enizibenzisayo xakukhonna amagama eningawaqondi eclassin? Okanye xakukhona into ongayi understandiyo. **(What resources do you use when there are words that are difficult for you to understand?)**
2. Uncedo ulifumanaphi. **(Where do you get help from?)**
3. V: mostly ngu misi **(most of the time, it is from the teacher).**
4. X:Ngu misi. **(teacher)** 5. R: And then
6. V: And then nogoogle uyandinceda sometimes **(google helps me sometimes).**
7. R: Apha classin? **(Here in the class?)**
8. V: No ekhaya **(no at home)**
9. R: oh kokwenu ugoogle uyakunceda? **(Oh google helps you at home?)**
10. V: ukuze xandingacacelwanga, ndingali understandanga igama, kuthiwe zesihambe siyolijonga. Ndifika ndilijonge ku google. **(When I did not understandi so I don't remain not understanding the word. It is said we should go and find the meaning of the word; I then look it look it up on google).**
11. R: Then eclassin? **(Then here in the class?)**
12. V: ndifike ngemini elandelayo ndilazi, ndikwazi ukucacisa. **(I arrive the next morning knowing the word and how to explain the word).**

KEY: R: Researcher, V: Vivi

Learners cite teachers as language resources they rely on (line 3) when they do not understand the meaning of words. One of the learners, as cited in line 6 of extract 3.11, reaches out to a technological search engine (google) to search for the meaning of words. This external resource is used by the learner out of the classroom at her home and replaces the teacher at home as a language resource. According to V in (line12), the following day the learner comes to the classroom knowing the word (line 10, 11 and line 12) as a result of searching for the meaning over the internet.

4.5.2 Dictionary and a library as a language & assessment resource.

It is important to note that, there were only a few dictionaries available to learners and then only in 2 of the three classes.

According to the learners, dictionaries are only made available to learners when the teachers deem it appropriate for learners to use them.

Extract 4.3: Learner interview

1. R: Idictionairies ninazo? **(Do you have dictionaries?)**
 2. K: Ewe Sinazo **(Yes, we have them).**
 3. O: Ewe Titshala. **(Yes, Teacher).**
 4. R: Nizisebenzisa xakutheni? **(When do you use them?)**
 5. K: xasijonga gama sifuna ukwazi ukuba lithetha ukuthini elagama. **(When we are looking for the meaning of that word).**
 6. R: Sendisho kuba nguban onegunya lokuzisebenzisa, niyazithathela or nizinkwa ngu misiq? **(Who has the right to use, do you take them or are they given by the teacher?)**
 7. K: Sizi nikwa ngu Titshala **(We are given by the teacher?)**
 8. O: Siyacela kumisi Asinike. **(We request the teacher to give us)**
 9. K: Sizinikwa ngu Titshaala Sir. **(They are given to use by the teacher Sir).**
 10. R: Nivumelekile kuba nigoduke nazo? **(Are you allowed to take them home?)**
 11. K: ngamanye amaxesha but funek asibhale phantsi misiq, ukuba uyithathile dictionary.
- R: Researcher, K: Kwanga; O: Odwa.

In two grade 6 classrooms, the learners have dictionaries stacked in the classroom. These dictionaries serve as auxiliaries when learners engage with teaching and learning materials including assessment materials. Learners are allowed to go home with dictionaries after they have first registered their names (line 11). One interesting revelation was that learners are not allowed to use the dictionaries during summative assessments, for example class tests and examinations.

Extract 4.4: Learner interview

1. Y: the dictionary they do not give it to play, when you get the dictionary, you look for words you need and put them in your head, so that in the exam, you write it straight in the exam without the dictionary.
2. R: SO you are only assisted during teaching and learning but during class tests you are not allowed to use it.
3. A+L: No

KEY: R: Researcher: Yamkela, A: Abel, L: Leticia

The multilingual learners use dictionaries to memorise the definition of words (line 1) because they are not allowed to use dictionaries during the writing of assessments (see, line 2 and line 3). While the school has many English and Afrikaans printed dictionaries per the two grade 6 classrooms, there is one IsiXhosa Dictionary for the whole intermediate phase (grade 4-6). There are no multilingual/bilingual dictionaries owned by the school. One learner in my research sample owns a bilingual dictionary. In addition, there is no library in the school, with books for learners to read as the library was converted to a classroom.

4.6 Language ideologies

Over the period of data collection, I observed how aspects of language ideologies played a role in teaching and learning and in assessment practices. The interviews revealed how perceptions of language influenced how languages were valued by the teachers and learners. According to learners in the grade 6 English home language class, they were only allowed to speak English in their English lessons.

Extract 5

- pp. R: Okay, so in the classroom, which language is mostly used? 2.
- Q: English
3. R: what if you were to speak Xhosa in the English classroom?
4. Q: the teacher will tell me that I must go attend the Xhosa class if I want to speak Xhosa in the Classroom.

KEY: R: Researcher, Q: Qiqi

The participants reveal that they are called to order when they speak their home languages, often told 'go to the Xhosa class if you want to speak Xhosa in the classroom'. Languages are seen as bounded entities insulated from each other (Garcia 2007, 2009; Makalela, 2015). This is confirmed during the interview with their teacher.

"T1: When it comes to writing you know. When it comes to languages, yes, it is a problem because Xhosa learners find it very difficult to pronounce themselves, because sometimes they will ask you questions using Xhosa whereas they are in an English Class. Also, with the colored learners, sometimes they will just use Afrikaans. So, I must always put that pause of okay, this is the English class you must use one language, which is English because you are in an English class".

The teacher asserts that she blocks attempts by Afrikaans and Xhosa language speakers to use their home language and insists on monolingual classes. Scholars such as Guzula, McKinney and Taylor (2016) have expressed concern about the dominance of monolingual ideologies in the South African schooling sector, despite evidence of translingual interaction in these classrooms. The dominance of one languages of instruction, and the preference of English LOLT over other official languages is closely related to the so-called monolingual bias in language teaching and is operationalized in the strict separation of the languages of instruction (see the notions of 'two solitudes', Cummins, 2008; and 'separate bilingualism', Creese & Blackledge, 2010). As a consequence, learners' linguistic repertoire is suppressed based on the reason that they are in a home language class.

From a translanguaging perspective, these students are constrained in using their full linguistic repertoires and thus constrained in both expression and learning (e.g., García & Wei, 2014).

4.6.1 English hegemony and extensive use in the multilingual classroom.

The English language regime was apparent during assessment practices, especially in English FAL and English home language. Learners were told to speak, ask, and respond to assessment questions in English. In the Social Science class learners' home language was allowed to facilitate meaning in instances where they find content difficult to understand. However, English was extensively used to access Social Sciences assessment content.

Extract 5.1: learner interview

R: Pha kwi History social science, usebenzisa amalwimi amangaphi? **(Then with Social sciences? How many languages does she use?)**

K: Eliyi one

O: Eliyi one

R: Which is English'

All Nod

R: Mawungeva? **(When you don't understand?)** 7. K: ukucaciselela ngesiXhosa. **(S/he explains in Xhosa).**

O: 2, usebenzisa 2. **(S/he uses two).**

R: Leliph elisetyenziswa kakhulu? **(Which language used the most?)** 10. K: English

pp. O: English> most of the time sibhala, history geography, psw and creative arts nge... **(Most of the time we write history, geography, psw and creative arts using.)** 12. R: Niyi bhala ngoluphi ulwimi? **(You write, using what language?)**

13. O: Nge English. **(By English).**

14. R: But ingcazelo zibangoluphi ulwimi? **(But Explanations, are in what language?)**

15. O+L: nge Sixhosa. **(Xhosa)** .

KEY: Researcher, Kwanga:O, Odwa: K

Thus, learners' home language was sporadically used in the classroom, but and only in certain subjects. English was dominant. While there was some bilingual mediation as demonstrated in this chapter, learners were assessed monolingually. English is constantly reinforced as the default norm, and it is what counts as the language of teaching and learning (McKinney, 2017).

4.6.2 Learners' language preference.

In every focus group interview convened, I enquired about learners' language preference to understand the languages valued by learners. Except for two learners, all the learners I interviewed chose English as the language they prefer for teaching

and learning, and they justified their reasons. The extract from an interview depicted below is typical and reveals reasons why learners prefer English as the language of teaching and learning.

Extract 5.2: Learner interview

R: yeyiphi language oyibonabalulekile for ukufunda eskolweni? **(Which language is important for learning at school?)**

L: Yi English. **(It is English).**

M: Yi English. **(It is English).**

R: Ngoba kutheni? **(Why?)**

M: Nalapha iyefana nala mzekelo bendiyichaza, ukuba mos sithetha languages ezi different, so ikegoku xasithetha sonke apha English. Lanto thethekayo ikwazi ukuthethka Easily.Xah uthetha nomntu ongakwazi ukuthetha ulwimi lakho. **(It is the same in this case, just like the example I explained, that is we speak different languages, so when we speak English here, that what is spoken can be easily spoken when you speak to someone who does not speak your language).**

KEY: R: Research, M: Mpumi, L: Lady

Learners' preference for English as the language of teaching, learning and assessment (see line 2 and 3) is based on the reason that it is easy to speak English and they can easily hold a conversation with a person who does not speak the same language. Therefore, English language is preferred as a language that accommodates multilingual learners and people who speak varied languages (Line 5).

Only two learners out of the 14 learners preferred Xhosa and as the language of teaching, learning and assessment. When asked the reason behind the preference of Xhosa, one learner asserted:

L: Ngoba yi home language yam **(because it is my home language).**

Adding to the response of L, another learner justified the preference of Xhosa as a linguistic mode of teaching, learning and assessment because:

“M: Ngoba language ethetheka ekhaya. **(Because it is the language spoken at home)**”.

M's assertion on language preference, indicates a sense of pride in her association with the home language which carries unmentioned family experiences

4.6.1 English Language valorisation over African languages.

Extract 5.3: Learner interview

1. R: So now which languages do you value the most? Which languages do you think are important?
2. Silence
3. R: which languages are important? Which languages are important in your life? And why?
4. X: Its English
5. R: why is English important
6. X: Because English kuzothi xaku explainwa ngayo uzoy understander, uyayfunda naseskolweni. (When it is explained in English you will understand it). So kengoku soyi understander. Sowu understander kwanto e about English, Kwa mpendulo e about English sewuyi understander. **(So now that you understand, you understand everything about English, every English answer you understand).**
7. V: then into mamawam aqhele kuyisho kuba iEnglish is the key ekufumaneni umsebenzi. Because if, mna mos idream yam is to be an entrapreneur, so kengoku xasewungakwazi ukuthetha iEnglish uzazifumana njani iclients because kwiclients funeka fumane ethetha siZulu, Sesotho yonke language. **(What my mother usually says is that English is the key to getting a job, because for example me, my dream Is to be an entrepreneur, so now when you don't know how to speak English, how will**

you get clients? Because you will get a client that speaks Zulu, Sotho, and every language).

Z: because, like, abantu ohlala nabo kubalula kuthetha English. Wena zabe thetha siXhosa, lowomntu xa uthetha naye soze aku understande. Funeka uthethe naye nge

English ukuze aku understande. **(It is easy to speak English with people you live with. When you speak Xhosa, the person won't understand you. You must speak to the person in English, so that s/he can understand you).** KEY:

R:Research, X:Xola,Z:Zipho,V:Vivi

One of the themes that emerged concerning language ideology was the value of English over African languages. This emerged out of the interview questions posed to learners about which language they perceived as prominent.

The extract above represents the many reasons why multilingual learners value the English language. One of the reasons is that when one understands English, one will be able to understand everything being taught at school using English. Learners also spoke about how the English language is key to employment. One learner alluded to the fact that the English language is a key to achieving life aspirations and dreams. In other words, English is viewed as social capital. Kwamngwalamu (2003) cites evidence from his research where participants perceive English as the “language of learning, which one cannot not do anything without, cannot get a job, cannot travel, and cannot succeed in life”. IsiXhosa and IsiZulu are not associated with any of these attributes. On the contrary, the purpose of learning IsiZulu is to keep the language and the culture it embodies alive, so that the children did not forget their roots” (Kwawangamalu, 2003:236). Similarly, the English language is perceived by learners in my study as a mutual language that facilitates meaning (line 6). According to one of the participants, IsiXhosa language can't be a mediator of a conversation because it is not a language that is universally spoken (line 8) (see also Morris, 2017). Furthermore, teachers interviewed in my study who teach multilingual learners, saw no value in learners

learning African languages because they are languages that are not used to learn scientific concepts. The latter view of African languages by teachers resonates with Ophelio & Dangbégnon's (2019) assertion that Indigenous African languages have been disregarded and viewed negatively by Africans themselves.

4.7 Effect of LIEP in Assessment

A segment of the liEP (language in education policy) (Department of Education, 1997) below forms part of a language policy in education, at Highlands High. The objectives in the LIEP of the school seek to promote multilingualism and develop three languages which reflect Western Cape demographics.

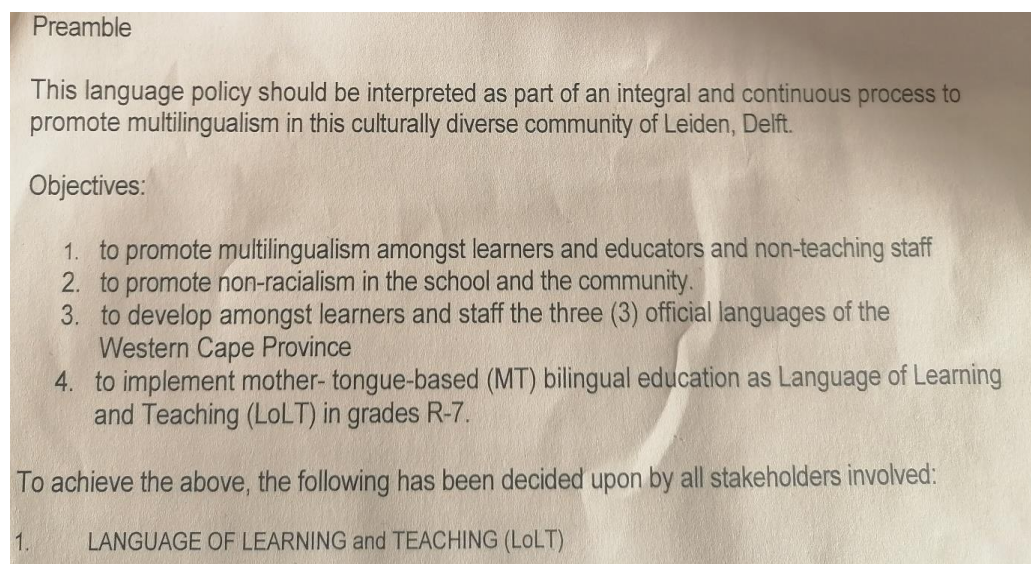


Figure 4.1: Schools language in education policy

The policy was arguably designed by stake holders with language ideologies who perceived languages as separate silos. There is no specific commitment to multilingual teaching, learning and assessment though it promotes multilingualism. Line 3 cites the commitment by the school to develop three languages amongst learners and staff yet there is a dearth of resources in developing isiXhosa and many other African languages. Further on, the stakeholders involved in designing and planning the language policy have stipulated the following assertion captured in the figure below.

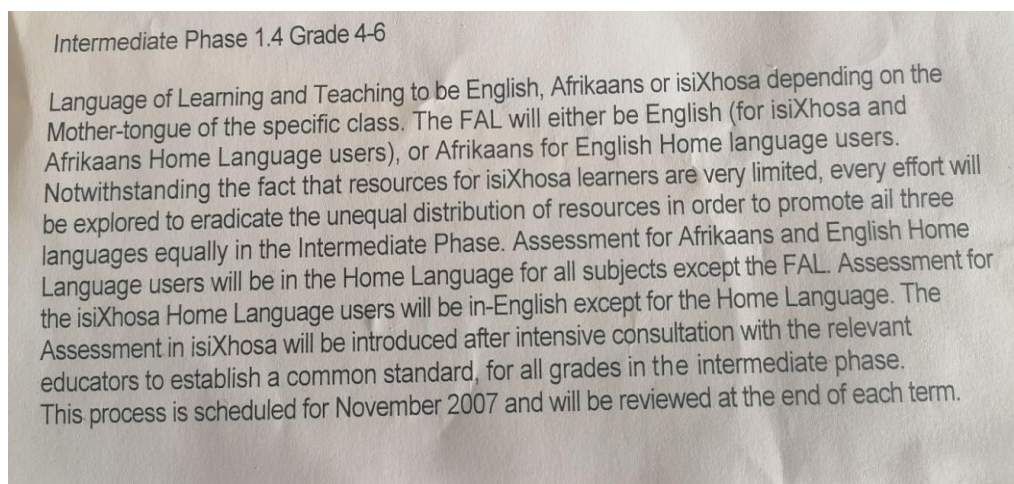


Figure 4.2: LOLT in grade 4-6.

The above figure details how the language of teaching and learning will be achieved and implemented. Ideally this policy is a multilingual language policy for multilingual learners. The first line of the paragraph states that 'LOLT will be English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa depending on the mother-tongue of the specific class'. In practice, the language of teaching and learning is English for English home language learners and Afrikaans for Afrikaans home language learners. This happens from grade 1 up to grade 7. However, for isiXhosa home language speakers, the LOLT and language of assessment are isiXhosa from grade 1 to grade 3 and in grade 4 a sudden switch happens to English. The latter was confirmed by the principal:

"P: yeah! Then in grade 4. They teach all the subjects in the medium of isiXhosa until grade 3. For the isiXhosa learners, even if they do isiXhosa as a home language subjects all the other subjects are done in English. I always tell the people that you think that you have had it difficult, but the isiXhosa learners have gone through much harder time, much more difficult because just imagine now imagine having to be taught all those subject in a language that you not so proficient in. It is difficult".

The principal laments the difficulty of learning and being assessed in a language in which one is not proficient. The school language policy inadvertently treats languages as monoglot (Canagarajah 2006; Shohamy 2013) under the banner of multilingualism. In practice, languages are fluid not bounded from each other, and as is evident from my data, they are used by learners as dynamic tools of meaning making. There is an injustice in how isiXhosa home language learners are being assessed. In figure 4.2 the language policy stipulates that:

Assessment for Afrikaans and English home language learners will be in the home language for all subjects except FAL Subjects. Assessment for the IsiXhosa home language speakers will be in English for All subjects except for the home language.

The statement above reveals the injustice rendered by the school's policy stakeholders to IsiXhosa home language speakers, who must be assessed in a second/third language whilst English and Afrikaans home language users are assessed in their first language (L1). As confirmed by the principal, isiXhosa learners are performing poorly at the school. I argue that this language inequality most probably has dire consequences for this group of learners. As Wolf et al. (2008) contends, learners perform lower on content area assessments when they are administered in English than if they would be assessed in a language in which they are (more) proficient. Studies show that the use of additional language as LOLT results in, learners underperforming academically (Omidire, 2019). As Wolf et al (2018:12) argue, "When linguistic complexity unnecessarily interferes with, ability to illustrate their knowledge, this poses a serious validity concern".

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research aim of this research study was to understand a group of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences when dealing with monolingual assessment practices. To generate knowledge on this, I focused on investigating assessment practices, language and assessment challenges encountered by grade 6 multilingual learners in three classes. I collected data from multiple data sources (observations, interviews with learners, teachers, and the principal, as well as written assessments). I focussed on IsiXhosa home language, English First additional language, English home language and Social Sciences. I chose these, to understand learners' assessment progress and challenges across the four subjects, as well as the resources they use and the ways in which teachers and the school supports/do not support multilingual learners.

5.2 Findings

A key finding is that, while most learners are multilingual, and the school language policy advocates multilingualism, learners are only permitted to use one language when writing classroom and formal assessments. With the exception of the English HL class, where only English was permitted in preassessment discussions, in all other subjects, teachers generally made use of translanguaging to mediate classroom-based, informal assessments. Bilingual discussions and translation of assessment questions were strategies used to mediate comprehension assessment. This was achieved through translating English assignment questions to Xhosa, through learner questions, peer discussions and through limited use of dictionaries (permitted in two classrooms).

The data reflect a disjuncture between bilingual oral discussions of assessments and monolingual written expressions in assessment transcripts. As a result, learners' linguistic repertoires were harnessed during assessment discussions preceding informal assessment, but their various languages were silenced on paper. Formal assessment included limited, or no mediation and learners were required to work independently.

Powerful language ideologies permeating in the grade 6 English home language classroom, limited the learners use of home languages in pre-assessment discussions.

As a result, learners had to smuggle in the vernacular of Xhosa (see Probyn, 2009) to discuss assessment during the absence of the teacher.

The data shows that learners employ translanguaging to share meaning of assessments questions when writing formative assessments, through reading the assessment in English and explaining in

Xhosa. However, learners' use of translanguaging was discouraged during summative assessments.

Difficulties with every day and specialised vocabulary, as well as difficulty with assessment literacy emerged as one of the hurdles learners' faces when engaged with assessments. The data shows evidence of the ways in which learners drew on their linguistic repertoire to construct meaning in monolingual assessments.

In general, learners experienced assessment challenges in English FAL and Social Sciences as subjects since English is extensively and dominantly used across majority of grade six subjects as the language of assessment. As evident in the data, they are expected to express their content knowledge in a language, in which they are not yet competent. Arguably learners possess English and IsiXhosa BICS which enables them to operate in context-embedded contexts, but encounter challenges in assessments because of bear minimum CALP skills. They have limited academic language skills to enable them to deal with the decontextualised reading and writing tasks required by assessment. Their limited language proficiency in the language of assessment also results in slow writing speed in assessment contexts.

My analysis of learners' assessments reflects how learners struggle with the language and literacy practices required by assessment, and they often struggle to produce written expression, resulting in what Ker (2015) conceptualised as pseudo writing. Learners' assessment transcripts reveal that there is a pretextual gap (Blommaert, 2004), a gap between what learners are expected to write in assessment and what they write. Additionally, there is an assessment gap between what the teacher expects of learners to write and what learners produce as answers. I argue that the pretextual gap originates from lack of comprehension and minimum language competency.

Nevertheless, the data shows that learners use translanguaging as a tool to make meaning in their writing they draw on a repertoire of linguistic resources, and strategies to access meaning. However, these efforts are often limited by restrictions placed on their language use by teachers.

I concluded chapter 4 by illustrating how language ideologies inhibit the translingual practices in the classroom and perpetuate the dominance and extensive use of English during writing assessments. While teachers use translanguaging within the classroom, they nevertheless hold the view that languages are distinct and compartmentalised silos. Further, language valorisation appeared to be an underlying factor in assessment practices. The English language was valued by teachers and learners because of its affordances, such as mediation of conversation, social mobility, and economic success.

I argue that language ideologies are perpetuated by the school's language in education policy.

Teachers provide significant linguistic support by assisting learners during classroom-based, formative assessment. Teachers also provided support by scaffolding (Vygotsky 1978) and contextualising assessments. This was done in situations where the teacher and learners discussed the assessment questions moments before the assessment could be written.

Further, this research study found that teachers support learner's assessments through preparatory assessments, which were done by setting up similar assessments prior to the formal written assessments. Mock assessments are regarded by one of the teachers as key to enabling learners' comprehension. However, in this study, learners had to complete summative assessment on their own and in English.

5.3 Recommendations

My case study was relatively small, and the COVID context in which data were collected placed limitations on how much access I had to observation of assessments. Nevertheless, the study has surfaced important information about learners' experiences of assessment. Further research is required on how monolingual assessment practices restrain learners' potential and academic performance and on how silencing learners' linguistic repertoires yields to semi comprehension. Further

research is also needed to explore how learners can be provided with appropriate resources to facilitate their multilingual development.

5.4 Conclusion

The continued use of monolingual assessments which restrict multilingual learners' use of his/her linguistic repertoires will perpetuate academic inequality because monolingual assessments arguably position the monolingual test taker as monolingual and channel the multilingual learner to use one language. It is critical for teachers to understand that learners should not be limited to the use of one language as means of understanding and completing assessment tasks. An assessment that is reliable and valid must allow both monolingual and multilingual learners the opportunity to use their home languages, to express abstract concepts verbally and in writing.

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5.6 Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics approval letters

Appendix B: consent forms

Appendix C: Information letter

Appendix D: Interview questions

Appendix E: Social Sciences Assessment

Appendix F: English HL assessment

Appendix G: English FAL Assessment

Appendix A



Directorate: Research

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REFERENCE: 202103023-1796

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Siviwe Cingo
PO Box 52
Bizana
4800

Dear Mr Siviwe Cingo

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: A CASE STUDY OF GRADE 6 MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN ENGAGING WITH MONOLINGUAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN A WORKING-CLASS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL IN CAPE TOWN

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 April 2021 till 30 September 2024**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 24 March 2021

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Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

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EDNREC20210206

25 February 2021

Siviwe Cingo
CNGSIV002

RE: Ethical Clearance for Masters Research project

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been granted by the School of Education Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your academic project A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town. We wish you all the best with your research.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Joanne Hardman'.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOANNE HARDMAN

ETHICS CHAIR

"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

Appendix B

Learner consent form.

Please fill YES/NO in the reply slip below to tell me if you agree or not, that I may observe, audio record and interview you for a research study called '***A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town***'.

Permission for the study.

My Name is _____

I consent to

Being observed in the classroom	YES/NO
Being video recorded in the classroom	YES/NO
My notebooks and activity books to be observed	YES/NO
Being interviewed	YES/NO
Being Audio recorded during the interview	YES/NO

Sign_____

Date_____

dd/mm/yyyy

Teacher consent form.

Please fill YES/NO in the reply slip below to indicate whether or not you agree that I may observe, audio record and interview you for a research study called '*A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town*'.

Permission for research.

My Name is: _____

I consent to

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Being observed in the classroom. | YES/NO |
| 2. Being video recorded in the classroom | YES/NO |
| 3. Being audiotaped working in the classroom. | YES/NO |
| 4. Assisting in the collection of classwork. | YES/NO |
| 5. Being interviewed. | YES/NO |
| 6. Audio-recording of the interview. | YES/NO |

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that confidentiality will be maintained. I can withdraw at any time.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/guardian consent form.

This consent form is a form of a request that you permit your child to be part of the research project. By giving consent, you allow your child to be involved in the processes listed far below. Please indicate **Yes** where you give consent and **No** where you object. Your approval for your child to be observed and interviewed will help in completing the research study titled **‘A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners’ experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town’.**

Permission for research.

I fully understand that my child can withdraw from the research project anytime.

My Name is _____ My child’s name is _____

I consent to

My child being observed in the classroom	YES/NO
My child being video recorded in the classroom	YES/NO
My child being audiotaped during the lessons	YES/NO
My child’s school material being used for research purposes	YES/NO
My child being interviewed and recorded during the interviews	YES/NO
My child being audio recorded whilst interviewed.	YES/NO

Signature _____

Date _____

dd/mm/yyyy

Dear Learner

My name is Siviwe Innocent Cingo, I study at the University of Cape Town. I wish to be present in your grade 6 classroom observing how you read, understand, and answer assessments that are presented in one language during assessment practices that happen in the Social sciences, English and IsiXhosa lessons. This will happen only if you give me permission to observe you.

During observations, information will be collected, kept safe and private. My observation of you will not disadvantage you in any manner, it will not interfere in how you learn and it will not affect your marks/grades.

In collecting information, you will be observed, and video recorded in Social Sciences, English and IsiXhosa lessons. You will also be interviewed, audio recorded and your books, worksheets will be observed and analysed.

I will capture images of your assessment materials, including your workbooks and homework activities, **only if you approve**. Please know that your name, your schoolwork and the name of your school and its location will remain anonymous. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from participating when you want.

You can ask me any questions at any time:

Contact no: 0617283724 and email: siviwecingo@yahoo.com

Yours sincerely,

Siviwe Cingo

dd/mm/yyyy

Dear, grade 6 educator.

My name is Siviwe Cingo and I am currently registered as a master's student in the school of education at the University of Cape Town. I am conducting a research study which focuses on understanding learners' experiences of assessment practices and the difficulties or problems learners come across during such assessment practices and assessment materials. This research study is titled "A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town".

I assure you that your name and identity and the identity of the school and learners will be kept confidential and anonymous. I wish to let you know that this study does not focus in the methods you use to teach and how you are assessing learners. My focus will be on the learners' experiences.

All information relating to you will be safely stored with controlled access by password.

As much as I will present in the classroom, I will not interfere nor participate in the classroom discourses. You have my word, that when I observe the whole classroom, I will not interrupt you and your teaching.

I wish to let you know that you know you are free to withdraw from the study anytime you feel that you do not want to participate. Please know that there are no potential risks to you participating in this research study.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Siviwe Cingo

siviwecingo@yahoo.com

cell: 0617283724

dd/mm/yyyy

Parent/Guardian- Information letter.

Dear Mr/Ms

I, Siviwe Innocent Cingo, am a registered master's student at the University of Cape Town. One of the requirements of fulfilling this degree is to complete a research project Titled 'A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town'.

My research aims to understand the challenges faced by learners who are examined in their second or third language. My research will involve observation and video-recording of classes and work completed in class, as well audio-recorded interviews. Your child's name and identity will always be kept entirely confidential and anonymous and in all writing about the study. The name and exact location of the school will be kept fully confidential as well.

Your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way based on their choice and your approval for the child to participate. Your child's participation is completely voluntary, and you and your child will be free to withdraw his/her permission at any time during the project. There are no foreseeable risks in participating. In addition, your child will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be safely stored in a password protected computer.

You are welcome to ask any questions regarding this research by telephone and email to siviwecingo@yahoo.com and on 061 728 3724

I really hope that you will agree to your child's participation by signing the consent form provided.

Yours sincerely,

Siviwe Cingo

Principal information sheet

Dear Mr/Ms

I, Siviwe Innocent Cingo, am a registered master's student at the University of Cape Town. One of the requirements of fulfilling this degree is to complete a research project Titled 'A case study of grade 6 multilingual learners' experiences in engaging with monolingual assessment practices in a working-class township school in Cape Town'.

For this to be possible, I request your permission to carry out research at your school. This research project is based on the experiences of grade 6 multilingual learners in dealing with assessment practices and assessment materials.

I want to understand the language difficulties/challenges and blockages that multilingual learners encounter when dealing with formal and informal assessments practices and how they negotiate such challenges.

I have chosen grade 6, being an intermediate phase, where learners are taught elementary technical and academic skills, which then indicate that learners possess minimum experience of being assessed.

My research study involves interviews, audio recordings and observations. All letters and consent forms have been created for learners, their parents/guardians and teachers to request their approval to access their space of learning.

This research will be carried out in all 25 lessons (subject to change). Data collection will be in the form of classroom observations over a period of 8 weeks (subject to change). I will observe in the classroom during teaching and learning and assessment, using written fieldnotes and video recordings.

For this research to be possible and complete, it requires the participation of 3 teachers and 10 Grade 6 learners who are under your supervision. I wish to inform you that any information shared among myself, teacher and learners will be kept strictly confidential. The anonymity of the school, teachers and learners is guaranteed. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

Appendix D

Learner- Interview Questions

1. How many languages do you speak?
2. How many languages do you use at school, in class, outside class and among your friends? What languages do you speak in your household?
3. Which language is mostly used in the classroom and Which language or languages do you use to respond to the teacher? Do you happen to mix languages when speaking during class discussions?
4. What language difficulties do you come across when answering tests, exams?
5. What do you do when you don't understand the language in a test or don't know how to write a word?
6. What makes it easier for you to answer and complete your assessments?
7. Are you allowed to bring a dictionary use or use any help when writing assessments in class?
8. Do you happen to use two or more languages when interpreting or trying to understand a question? How does that work? /What do you do?
9. What language do you use as a resource during classroom discussions and during writing of classwork and tests?
10. Are you allowed to use more than one language when dealing with assessments or is it strictly one language?
11. What in the assessments make it easier or difficult for you to understand?

Teacher interview questions.

1. How long have you been teaching grade 6?
2. What challenges have you faced with assessing grade 6 learners?
3. How do you assist learners to understand the content knowledge you impart to them?
4. Do you use learners home languages in the classroom to explain content to grade 6 learners? How?
5. How do you assist learners to understand assessment questions?
6. Which language resources do you use when teaching and during assessment practices?
7. what languages do you use to carryout assessment practices?
8. What language challenges have you faced in teaching multilingual grade 6 learners?
9. What bilingual teaching strategies, such as code switching, and language mixing do you use when explaining concept questions for learners who do not understand what you are teaching and assessing?
10. how can learner's multilingual nature be encouraged in the classroom during teaching, learning and assessment?

Appendix E


LEIDEN AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SOCIAL SCIENCES · GEOGRAPHY
TERM 1.....GRADE 6

TOTAL.....40 MARKS
DATE.....2021
NAME AND SURNAME.....

Test
SECTION A
Question 1

1. Define the following word:
a) Sphere (3)

.....

2. What is a hemisphere? (3)

.....

3. Match column A with the meaning in column B. Write only the number and letter in the spaces provided for **Answers Example 1.1 C** (5)

Column A	Column B	Answers
1.1 Are facts that are measured in numbers.	A latitude	

LEIDEN AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

GRADE :6

HISTORY TEST

NAME AND SURNAME.....

APRIL 2021

MARKS: 40

QUESTION I

SOURCE 1

Study the following article and answer the questions that follow:

NOTE! Not all answers can be found in the article.

Kingdom of Mapungubwe

The Kingdom of Mapungubwe (1075- 1220) was a pre-colonial state in Southern Africa located at the confluence of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers, south of Great Zimbabwe.

The name "Mapungubwe" is derived from either Venda or Shona.

At the height of its prosperity, the population was about 5000 people.

Stone Masonry

Space organization in the kingdom involved the use of stone walls to demarcate important areas.

Origin

The largest settlement from what has been dubbed the Leopards Kopje culture is known as K2culture and was immediate predecessor to the settlement of Mapungubwe.

Burials at Mapungubwe Hill

At least twenty four skeletons were unearthed on Mapungubwe hill by archaeologists. Only eleven were available for analysis, with the rest disintegrating upon touch or as soon as they were exposed to light and air.

Mapungubwe Hill was abandoned in 1220 and the people travelled to different areas.

Adapted From:

Author Not Listed.(Lasy edited 12 October 2018).Kingdom of Mapungubwe/.Available:

Https: // en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom of Mapungubwe. Last accessed 23 December 2018.

LEIDEN AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL
English Home Language
Formal Assessment Task 3: Response To Texts

Marks 50
March 2021

Name: _____
Grade 6 _____

[20]

Question 1: Reading Comprehension

Study the article below and answer the questions that follow:

World Explorers

Throughout history people have always wondered what was beyond the next mountain, ocean, river, or even planet. Explorers are people who have blazed the trail in going to new places.

The Age of Exploration took place between the 15th and 17th centuries. During this time many countries in Europe sent out explorers to discover new lands, find trade routes, seek treasure, and gain territory for their country.

During this time much of the world was mapped and many world civilizations came into contact with each other. Sometimes it is called the Age of Discovery.

The reasons for exploration can vary widely. Most explorers certainly like the adventure of going to a new place, meeting new peoples and cultures, or taking on new challenges.

Many countries and rulers funded explorers in order to find new trade partners and goods. In some cases they hope to find new trade routes that would help them to transport goods cheaper than their competitors. This was the case of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus.

Often explorers have been in search of riches and treasure. The Conquistadors were primarily searching for gold and silver when they conquered the Native Americans of the New World.

In many cases, explorers are scientists hoping to learn about nature and new parts of the world. They may be hoping to find a new species of animal or type of plant.

Many explorers claimed the land they found in the name of their country. Countries like Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain amassed huge empires during the Age of Exploration.

Many explorers want to test their personal limits and be the first in the world to do something. These types of explorers include the men who raced to be the first to the North and South Poles, the top of Mount Everest, and to the Moon.

(2)

1.1 Give the definition of an explorer in your own words.

LEIDEN AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOLENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONALMARCH/APRIL 2021

LEARNER NAME AND SURNAME: _____

ACTIVITY	TOTAL MARKS	LEARNER MARK
ORAL (Reading aloud)	20	
ESSAY WRITING	20	
RESPONSE TO TEXT	20	
VISUAL TEXT	10	
LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	20	